Sanchi

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SANCHI

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SANCHI

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

SITUATED AT A DISTANCE OF ABOUT 9 KILOMETERS south-west of Vidisha between Bina and Bhopal Junctions of the Central Railway, the imposing Buddhist edifices on the hill of Sanchi (Lat. 23° 29′ N. and Long. 77° 45′ E.) in District Raisen, Madhya Pradesh, are at once magnificent and instructive. Sanchi has won an international fame through its remarkably well-preserved monuments and attracts thousands of visitors, including pilgrims and students of art and archaeology.

The monuments are within a kilometre of the railway-station of Sanchi, where all passenger trains and Amritsar Express stop. On previous intimation to the station-masters of Bina, Itarsi and Sanchi, Punjab Mail too may stop here for air-conditioned and First-class passengers travelling over 161 kilometres to and from the Sanchi station. Second-class passengers, when travelling in parties of not less than ten for a distance over 400 kilometres in this particular train, can avail of this facility as well. The place is also accessible by road

from Vidisha, the headquarters of the district of that name, and Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh, respectively 10 and 70 kilometres away.

The monuments are open daily from sunrise to sunset and the Archaeological Museum from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. A common entry-fee (for both monuments and the Museum), at the rate of 50 paise each, is charged in the case of the persons over 15 years of age. No entry-fee is charged on Friday. The tickets are available in the counter of the Booking-office attached to the entrance-gate of the Museum. Photographs of the monuments and museum-exhibits are available with the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, as well as with the Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Bhopal Circle, Bhopal. Picture postcards, guide-books and a few other Government publications can be obtained from the Archaeological Office at Bhopal and the Booking-office at Sanchi. The Assistant Superintending Archaeologist for Museums at Sanchi may, if necessary, be contacted for information. The free services of a guide-lecturer of the Archaeological Survey of India are also available at fixed hours except on Friday and Gazetted holidays.

The visitor with limited time at his disposal will make it convenient to visit at least Stūpas 1, 2 and 3, Temples 17 and 18, Temple and Monastery 45 and Monastery 51.

Persons intending to halt at Sanchi can get accommodation in the (i) Circuit House (usually reserved for the Government officers), (ii) P.W.D. Rest House, both with two double-bedded suits, (iii) Buddhist

dharma-śālā with paid accommodation normally for a period of three days in twelve rooms (four double-bedded) and (iv) I. T. D. C. Travellers' Lodge, besides the two well-furnished retiring rooms, both doubled-bedded, at the railway-station. For accommodation in the first two, prior permission of the Assistant Engineer, P. W. D., Raisen, is necessary, while for reservation in the fourth, Manager, Travellers' Lodge, Sanchi, or State Government Regional Tourist Officer, 5 Hamidia Road, Bhopal, may be contacted. One week's notice in advance to the Secretary, Mahabodhi Society, Sanchi, is normally necessary for accommodation in the third.

2. HISTORY

CROWNING THE HILL-TOP OF SANCHI, NEARLY 91 metres in height, the group of the Buddhist establishments commands a grand view even from a distance. It is unique not only in its having the most perfect and well-preserved *stūpas* but also in its offering a wide and educative field for the study of the genesis, efflorescence and decay of Buddhist art and architecture for a period of about thirteen hundred years, from the third century B C to the twelfth century A D, almost covering the whole range of Indian Buddhism. This is rather surprising, for Sanchi was not hallowed by any incident in Buddha's life; not is it known to have been the focus of any significant event in the history of Buddhist monachism. Hiuen Tsang, who so meticulously recorded the details connected with Buddhist monuments, is silent about it. The only possible reference to it is contained in the chronicles[1] of Sri Lanka, according to which Mahendra, son of Aśoka and his queen Devī, daughter of a merchant of Vidiśā,[2] whom Aśoka had married during his halt there on his way

[1] *The Mahāvaṁsa,* ed. W. Geiger (Pali Text Society, London, 1908), pp. 100-01; also *The Dīpavaṁsa,* ed. and tr. H. Oldenberg (London, 1879), pp. 42, 63, 147 and 168-70.

[2] Vidiśā (modern Besnagar near Bhilsa or Vidisha) was the capital of the ancient Ākara (eastern Malwa). Several groups of Buddhist monuments sprang up within 20 kilometres of this place, e.g., at Sanchi, Andher, Sonari, Satdhara and Pipaliya (Bhojpur).

to Ujjayanī as a viceroy, is said to have visited his mother at Vidiśā, and the latter took him up to the beautiful monastery of Vedisagiri[1] built by herself. Mahendra had stayed there for a month before he set out for Sri Lanka.

The foundation of the great religious establishment at Sanchi, destined to have a glorious career as an important centre of Buddhism for many centuries to come, was probably laid by the great Maurya emperor Aśoka (*circa* 273-236 B C), when he built a *stūpa* and erected a monolithic pillar here. In addition to his marriage with a lady of Vidiśā, the reason for his selection of this particular spot may be due to the fact that the hill-top served as an ideal place for giving a concrete shape to the newly-aroused zeal for Buddhism in the emperor, who is said to have opened up seven out of the eight original *stūpas* erected over the body-relics of Buddha and to have distributed the relics among innumerable *stūpas* built by himself all over his empire. By its quietude and seclusion ensuring a proper atmosphere for meditation, combined with its proximity to the rich and populous city of Vidiśā, Sanchi fulfilled all the conditions required for an ideal Buddhist monastic life. The dedicatory inscriptions at Sanchi unmistakably show that the prosperity of the Buddhist establishment here was, to a great extent, due to the piety of the rich mercantile community of Vidiśā. The nearness of the city, the strategic situation of which at the confluence of two rivers, the Betwa and the Bes, as

[1]In some recensions it is called Chetiyagiri.

well as on two important trade-routes resulted in a great overflow of wealth, was in no small measure responsible for the flourishing condition of Sanchi even when the empire of the Mauryas was a thing of the past.

After a temporary set back following the break-up of the Maurya empire, when the *stūpa* of Aśoka was damaged, the cause of the Buddhist establishment of Kākaṇāya[1] was taken up with a feverish zeal by the monks and the laity alike, not a negligible percentage of the latter being formed by visitors of Vidiśā for trade and other purposes. The religious fervour found its expression in a vigorous building activity about the middle of the second century B C, during which the Śuṅgas were ruling and which saw the stone encasing and enlargement of the *stūpa* of Aśoka, the erection of balustrades round its ground, berm, stairway and *harmikā,* the reconstruction of Temple 40 and the building of Stūpas 2 and 3.[2] The same intense religious aspiration and creative forces continued unabated in the next century as well, when, during the supremacy of the Sātavāhanas, new embellishments, in the form of

[1]From the early votive inscriptions it appears that the locality was known anciently as Kākaṇāya or Kākaṇāva. The Gupta records of A D 412-13 and 450-51, inscribed on the ground balustrade of Stūpa 1, refer to it by Kākaṇādaboṭa. A still later inscription of the seventh century A D mentions it as Boṭs-Śrī-parvata. In the name of Kanakheda, an adjacent village, may be traced the survival of the ancient name.

[2]About the same time (*circa* 150 B C) a large brick *stūpa,* with a high stone railing and four gateways around it, was constructed at another place in central India, viz. Bharhut, about 15 kilometres to the south of Satna in Madhya Pradesh. Nothing of the *stūpa* now survives, but a part of the railing and a gateway are now preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.

elaborately-carved gateways, were added to Stūpas 1 and 3.

The political vicissitude which northern India went through immediately before and after the Christian era, when the Scytho-Parthians and Kushans invaded and annexed a large part of the land, had perhaps its repercussions at Sanchi as well, resulting in a slackening of structural activities. The establishment of a foreign power in the Malwa region under the Kshatrapas, engaged in chronic warfare, hardly provided any incentive for the dormant workshop. However, like the contemporary Buddhist centres of north and south-east India, Sanchi freed itself, during the period, from the earlier aniconic tradition, but its contribution to the evolution of the image of Buddha was nil, and it depended for such images on imports from Mathura.[1]

After a prolonged period of stagnation and lassitude under the Kashtrapas, there was a revival of sculptural activity at Sanchi during the reign of the Guptas who, after conquering the Kshatrapas (*circa* A D 400), provided peace and prosperity essential for the growth of artistic pursuits. The discovery of a few images in

[1]Of such imported Mathura images, mention may be made of a seated Bodhisattva image dated in the year 28 of the Kushan king Vāsishka (*Catalogue of the Museum of Archaeology at Sanchi*, no. A 82), the pedestal with feet of a standing image containing an inscription dated in the year 22 of Vaskushāṇa (*Muts. Cat.*, no.A 83) and the fragment of a pedestal with one foot of an image bearing an inscription which records the installation of Maitreya (*Mus. Cat.*, no. A 84). The first two (Acc. nos. 2715 and 2785) are on display in the Museum.

the Mathura sandstone, executed in the early Gupta tradition (*Mus. Cat.*, no. A 19, Acc. no. 2791; and Acc. no. 2790), proves that Mathura continued, even in the fourth century A D , to meet the demand of the clientele of Sanchi. But soon afterwards the local art of Sanchi once more came to the fore, and to this period belong the four images of Buddha seated under canopies against the berm of Stūpa 1 facing the four entrances.[1] But even in the best days of the Guptas the figures of Buddha from the *ateliers* of Sanchi fell short, in standard and number, of their counterparts at such Buddhist centres as Sarnath.

The Gupta period, which ushered in a new epoch in the history of Indian temple-architecture, saw at Sanchi as well as resuscitation of structural activity. In Temple 17 (p. 50), which has withstood the ravages of time, we find one of the earliest Gupta temples noted for their well-balanced proportion, restraint in ornamentation and elegance.

After the glorious days of the Guptas centrifugal forces became once more rampant. And then came the shock of the Hūṇa invasions, which resulted in the seizure of a large part of western and central India by that tribe. But that occupation was short-lived, to be shattered by Yaśodharman's victory over

[1]From the evidence of a record inscribed on a cross-bar of the ground balustrade of Stūpa 1, it is certain that the images were already installed before the Gupta year 131 (A D 450-51), when an endowment was made by the female lay-worshipper Harisvāminī in favour of the Buddhist community residing in the monastery of Kākanādaboṭa as well as for maintaining lamps in the jewel-house and at the places of the four Buddhas.

their chief Mihirakula in the first half of the sixth century.

On the ashes of the Gupta empire rose a number of small kingdoms, none of which was powerful enough to bring any large part of India under its aegis, till Harshavardhana (A D 606-647) achieved some sort of political unity in northern India. His espousal of the cause of Buddhism brought a fresh lease of life to that religion. The vestiges of the seventh and eighth centuries, which saw at Sanchi the building of several monasteries and temples, reveal a prosperous condition of the Buddhist community at the place. The number of the images of Buddha made during the period was fairly considerable; executed in late Gupta tradition, they, however, lack the charm and grace of their prototypes and are almost lifeless and mechanical.

After the death of Harsha, northern India once more became a prey to the ambitions of different dyansties. The Pratīhāras, who had established themselves in the Malwa region by the eighth century, were followed by the Paramāras in the next century. But Sanchi seems to have been hardly affected by these political changes, as the existence of a number of medieval monasteries and temples testifies to a period of continued prosperity. Temple 45 (p. 53), for example, which is now a mere shell bereft of its original splendour, has the same architectural pompousness and exuberance of decoration as would characterize the contemporaneous north Indian architecture. From the find of such images like Vajrasattva and Mārīchī, it is abundantly clear that Vajrayāna did extend its roots here as well.

It is not known how end came to the Buddhist establishment at Sanchi. No Buddhist monument can be assigned to the thirteenth century A D ; on the other hand, to this period belong a number of Brahmanical plaques containing representations of Vishṇu, Gaṇeśa, Mahishāsuramardinī, etc., which can be seen in the Museum.[1] We do not know if the Buddhists deserted the place or gradually lost their vital forces to maintain their individuality—thus succumbing to the all-absorbing force of Brahmanism, which was one of the potent causes of the extinction of Buddhism in the land of its birth.

[1]One of the architectural pieces relieved with seated figures of Śiva and Pārvatī now lies on the ruined plinth of Building 49.

3. EXPLORATION AND PRESERVATION

From the fourteenth century onwards, Sanchi was left deserted and unnoticed, till in the year 1818 General Taylor brought it to public attention by discovering its ruins, of which he found Stūpas 1, 2 and 3 intact. The great interest which this discovery created accounts to a large extent for the immense damages suffered by the monuments at the hands of amateur archaeologists and treasure-hunters. In 1822, Captain Johnson, Assistant Political Agent in Bhopal, opened up Stūpa 1 from top to bottom on one side, thus leaving a great breach which resulted in the collapse of the West Gateway and a part of the enclosing balustrade. Stūpa 2 was also partially destroyed. Alexander Cunningham, together with Captain F. C. Maisey, excavated Stūpas 2 and 3 in 1851 and found relic-caskets within. They also sank a shaft at the centre of Stūpa 1, which, however, failed to yield any relics. These operations, coupled with the depredations of villagers and the growth of vegetation, wrought havoc to the *stūpas*. The pillar of Aśoka was broken into pieces by a local zemindar, to be utilized as a sugar-cane press.

The question of repairs and preservation was not at all considered till 1881, when Major Cole took up the work in right earnest and succeeded, in the course of the next three years, in clearing off vegetation, filling in the breach in the dome of Stūpa 1, setting up its fallen

West and South Gateways and a part of its railing and restoring the gateway in front of Stūpa 3.[1] The other monuments, however, were left uncared for, and no attempt was made to expose the structures lying buried under débris. This work was later on undertaken creditably by Sir John Marshall, Director General of Archaeology in India, who, between the years 1912 and 1919, brought the monuments to their present condition. His work entailed a large-scale clearance of jungle, excavation and thorough conservation of the edifices, which included the complete dismantling and rebuilding of the south-west quadrant of Stūpa 1, setting up of its balustrades and erection of the crowning members, reconstruction of the dome, balustrade and crowning members of Stūpa 3, resetting of the out-of-plumb pillars of Temple 18, repairs to the perilously-decayed Temple 45, rebuilding of the retaining wall between the Main Terrace and Eastern Area, re-roofing and repairs of Temples 17, 31 and 32 and provision of an effective drainage. The site was next turfed and planted with trees and flowering creepers. A small museum was also built to house the loose antiquities found in the course of these operations.[2]

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[1]It is believed that in the course of the restoration of the gateways, the original positions of the top and bottom architraves of the South Gateway and the middle and bottom architraves of the West Gateway of Stūpa 1 and the top architrave of the gateway of Stūpa 3 were reversed, so that what now appear to be their front sides were in reality their back sides and *vice versa*. In describing the locations of the reliefs thereon (pp. 25 ff.) the faces as they exist at present have been taken into account.

[2]As this museum-building was inadequate for the display of sculptures according to the requirements of a museum, a new building has been constructed some years back for the purpose at the foot of the hill.

In 1936, Mohammad Hamid excavated the ruins on the hill-slope between Stūpas 1 and 2 and brought to light the well-preserved shell of a monastery. Since then, though no excavation has been done, the monuments have received persistent attention and have thus been saved for posterity.

4. THE MONUMENTS

THE MONUMENTS OF SANCHI MAY BE DIVIDED INTO two groups—one comprising the edifices situated on the hill-top and the other the isolated ones on the western slope of the hill (pl. XIII).

The plateau on the top of the hill, shaped like an irregular oblong, measuring about 384 metres from north to south and 201 metres from east to west and comprising three well-defined areas—the Main Terrace, the Eastern Area and the Southern Area—is encompassed by a stone circuit-wall, built in about the eleventh or twelfth century A.D. Within this wall are located the majority of monuments, numbered 1 to 50 by Marshall, who retained most of the numbers already given by Cunningham. The stepped pathway, leading from the foot of the hill up to the north-west corner of the plateau, was originally constructed by Cole and afterwards extensively rebuilt by Marshall. Of late, a motorable road has been constructed to link the bottom of the hill with the entrance-gate of the monuments. The ancient road connecting Vidiśā with Sanchi ascended the hill near the north-west corner of the Purāniā tank (pl. XIII); its traces at the first stage of ascent can be seen at Chiknī Ghāṭī, so named on account of the smoothness of the stone flags due to constant traffic in olden days.

After seeing the monuments on the plateau, the visitor will get down to the western slope by a path

which starts near the West Gateway of Stūpa 1 and leads the visitor downhill, *via* Monastery 51[1] and Stūpa 2. Below the latter, the path coincides with the tail-end of an ancient road, paved with heavy slabs of stone, which begins near Stūpa 7 on the plateau and following a devious course, joins the alignment of the present path a little above Stūpa 2. The ruins of a number of edifices can be seen on both sides of the ancient road.

A. The Main Terrace

(i) Stūpa I

History

The Great Stūpa,[2] as it stands today, consists of an almost hemispherical dome *(aṇḍa)*, truncated near the top and crowned by a triple umbrella *(chhatrāvali)* set at the centre of a heavy masonry pedestal, within a square railing (pl. I). A high circular battered terrace *(medhi)*, approached by a double stairway on the south and meant for circumambulation *(pradakshiṇa)*, is built against the base. A second stone-paved procession-path is provided at the ground-level by the encircling ground balustrade; it has access from the cardinal directions through four exquisitely-carved gateways. The diameter of the *stūpa* is 36·60 metres and its height, excluding the railing and umbrella, 16·46 metres.

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[1]The monastery, excavated in 1936 (p. 60), has now been numbered 51.

[2]Originally, the *stūpas* had a funerary association, being mounds containing the ashes and charred remains of the dead.

The present *stūpa* encases an earlier one of about half its present dimensions. The latter, built of burnt bricks of large dimensions and mud mortar, has justifiably been attributed to Aśoka, the main reasons being that the levels of its floor and of the inscribed pillar of the emperor (p . 46) are the same, and that the bricks used in it resemble, in shape, fabric and size, those in other Aśokan structures. Corroboration also comes from the discovery of fragments of an umbrella with concentric bands having radiating ribs in between; made of the Chunar sandstone, they bear the characteristic Mauryan polish (now in the Museum, *Mus. Cat.*, no. A 2). The umbrella must have crowned the original *stūpa*.

The *stūpa* of Aśoka suffered from wanton damage, deliberately inflicted by some hostile agency, before the middle of the second century B C , when it underwent a complete reconstruction, consisting of a stone encasing, a terrace with a double flight of steps, balustrades (ground, stairway and berm), a paved processional path, crowning members comprising a *harmikā* in the form of a *stūpa*-shaped stone relic-coffer[1] and an umbrella with a railing and a stone pavement extending over a large part of the plateau—all built in sandstone either quarried locally or from the neighbouring hill of Nagauri. Thus, the plan and form of the Great Stūpa as enlarged in the Śuṅga period, were almost the same as they are now.

[1]The ponderous lid, with a mortise hole on its convex top to receive the shaft of the crowning umbrella, of this coffer, now lies in fragments near Stūpa 7.

The casing of ashlar masonry with hammer-dressed stones was done by the construction of an encircling envelope at a certain distance from the core and the filling of the intervening space with heavy blocks of stone. Both the dome and the terrace were next given a thick coating of concrete, extensive patches of which are still found on the dome. This facing was probably finished off with a layer of fine plaster.

The balustrades consist of a series of octagonal (oblong in the case of the *harmikā*-balustrade) uprights *(stambha)* with lenticular cross-bars *(sūchi)* mortised into them and crowned by enormous copings *(ushṇīsha)*, rounded at the top. The outer faces of the uprights of the berm and stairway balustrades are carved with one complete medallion at the centre and two half medallions at the ends; these medallions contain a variety of motifs, mostly flowers and animals, the latter often drawn realistically, and rarely plant compositions, human figures, mythological beings like centaurs, and birds. The treatment of the end-uprights is slightly more elaborate. Unrelieved by any bas-reliefs, the ground and *harmikā* balustrades, however, are austerely plain. The massive ground balustrade is divided into four quadrants by entrances formed by L-shaped projections of the railing near the cardinal directions. The reproduction of the technique of wood constructions in these balustrades shows that stone as building material was new to the builders.

The balustrades and pavements owe their origin to the liberality and joint effort of a large number of devotees hailing from various parts of India, their names being inscribed on them.

The next embellishment, in the form of four elaborately-carved gateways (*toraṇa*), was made during the reign of the Sātavāhanas in the first century B C , as an inscription on the top architrave of the South Gateway records the gift of one Ānanda who was the foreman of the artisans (*āvesani*) of King Śātakarṇi, an early member of the Sātavāhana dynasty. The extra railing, found necessary to connect the main balustrade with one of the pillars of each Gateway, was also provided at this period. The most interesting of the Sanchi relics, the gateways are described below at some length.

The last accretion to the *stūpa* took place after nearly five centuries, when, during the rule of the Guptas, four images of Buddha, each seated under a pillared canopy, were installed against the walls of the *stūpa* facing its four entrances, some time before the year 450. They are in the *dhyāna-mudrā* with an attendant on either side; their haloes are elaborately carved.

The Gateways

Of the gateways, all of the first century B.C., the earliest to be built was the one on the south, which was the principal entrance, as is proved not only by the situation of Aśoka's pillar (p. 46) but also by the existence of the landing with the stairway on that side. This was successively followed by the North, East and West Gateways; but there could not have been any long interval between their erections: the south pillar of the West Gateway and the middle architrave of the South Gateway were the gifts of the same person—one Balamitra, the pupil of Aya-Chuḍa; similarly, one

Nāgapiya, a native of Kurara, was the donor of both the south pillar of the East Gateway and the north pillar of the West Gateway. The South Gateway has suffered most, while the North Gateway (pl. II) is the best preserved and retains most of its original decorative features, giving an adequate idea of the pristine beauty of the gateways. Their authors seem to have been essentially workers on wood, ivory and metal—a supposition substantiated by an inscription on the west pillar of the South Gateway recording its decoration (*rūpakamma*) by the ivory-workers of Vidiśā.

Each gateway consists of two square pillars crowned by a set of four lions, elephants[1] or pot-bellied dwarfs,[2] supporting a superstructure of there curviform architraves with spirally-rolled ends, the overall height excluding crowning elements, being about 8.53 metres. Between the architraves, separated from each other by four square blocks, are inserted three carved uprights, the interspaces being filled with elephant- and horse-riders facing both ways. Projecting from the abacus of the capitals and supporting the ends of the lowest architraves are graceful bracket-figures of *śālabhañjikās*. The spaces in between the ends of the architraves are also occupied by similar but smaller figures, while on the scrolls stand lions or elephant-riders. Crowning all,

[1]The well-finished empty cavities at the root of the tusks of all the eight tuskless elephants of the North Gateway evidently held detached tusks, perhaps of ivory.

[2]The varied facial expressions of these dwarfs of rugged strength, all represented on the West Gateway, are particularly noteworthy; some are groaning under the weight, some again bearing it resignedly, while others taking it rather lightly.

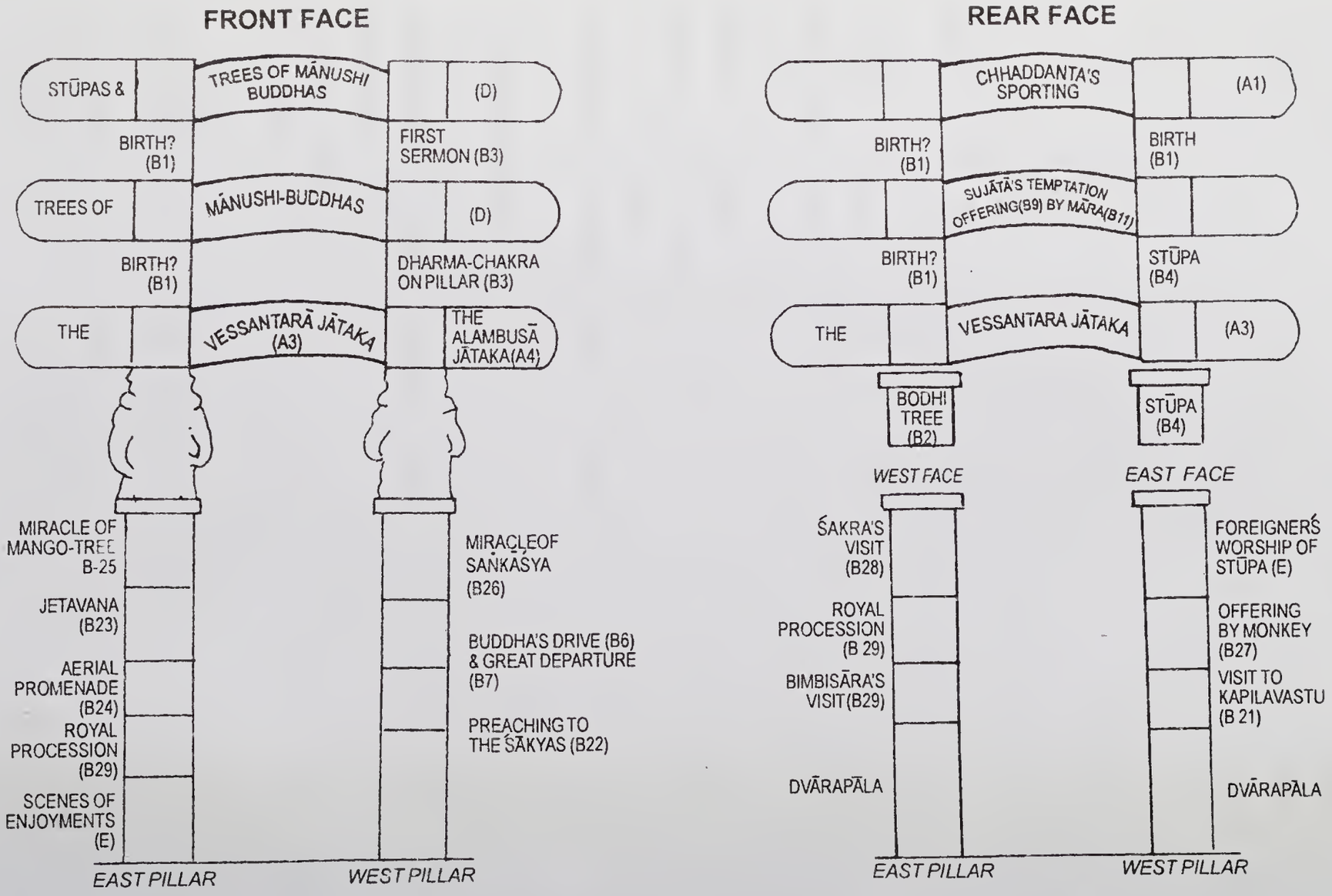


Fig. 1. *North Gateway : index of scenes*

at the centre of the top architrave, are a *dhama-chakra* flanked by *chāmara*-bearing *yakshas* and exquisitely-decorated *tri-ratnas*, symbolizing the trinity of Buddhism —Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha (pl. III). The bottom side of the lowest architraves is relieved with a row of lotuses, the central lotus of the north, east and west sides being somewhat in the form of a drop. The top face of the sill of the gateways is adorned with a medallion at the centre and two half medallions at the ends with facets in between.

The entire surface of the gateways is covered with bas-reliefs representing scenes and decorations. In spite of a disparity in the standard of workmanship and treatment due to varying ability of sculptors, the carvings are definitely more developed and mature, in conception, technique and composition, than those of the balustrade of Stūpa 2 (p. 62). The artist had by now passed the archaic stage and handled stone with greater ease. The figures no longer suffer from the rigid frontality; nor do they seem to be the outcome of pure 'memory-picture'. They are supple and natural to some extent and are shown in diverse postures, their movements somewhat free and unconstrained. The reliefs have matured in depth. Though the artist is yet unable to grapple the problem of tri-dimensional depth and perspective, the grouping and balancing of figures are often done in such a way that they create an illusion of depth and distance. Further, the art impresses greatly by its rhythm, symmetry, decorative beauty and perfect handling of the floral and plant motifs. It may be noted that the Buddhists had taken into their service to an appreciable

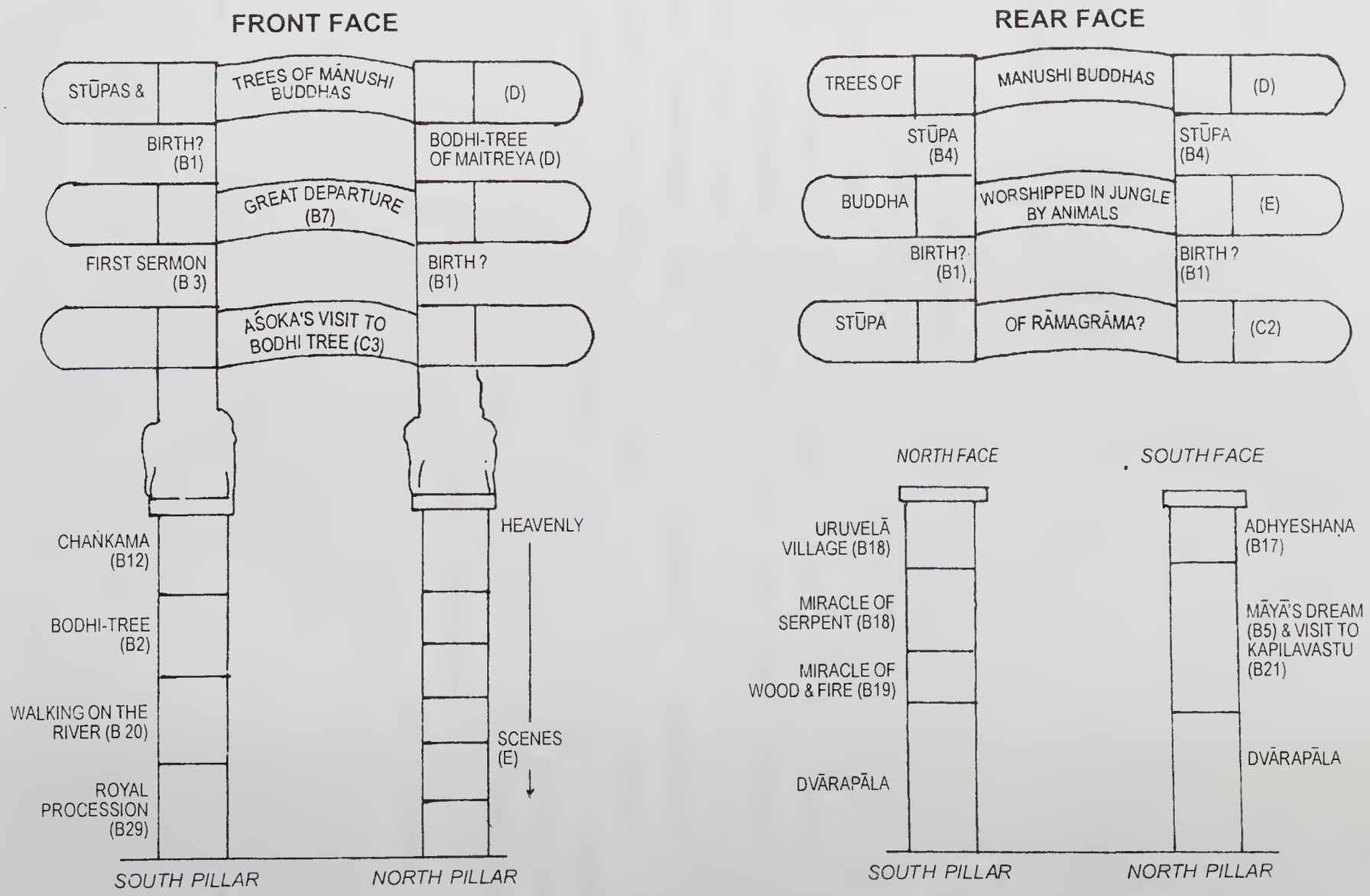


Fig. 2. *East Gateway : index of scenes*

extent popular mundane art of the time, adopting many of the old-time fables, popular cults and superstitions with such changes as were necessary for imparting to them the Buddhist complexion. They even admitted flagrantly amorous scenes on their sacred monuments, which do not fit in with Buddha's teachings.

That these gateways, together with the balustrade, were painted is evident from the traces of red paint still sticking to the East Gateway and the balustrade flanking it.

The subject-matter of the carvings on the gateways may be broadly classified as follows (figs. 1-4).

A. Scenes from the *Jātakas*,
B. Scenes from the life of Gautama Buddha,
C. Events in the subsequent history of Buddhism,
D. Scenes relating to the Mānushi-Buddhas, and
E. Miscellaneous scenes and decorations.

A. Scenes from the *Jātakas*.—The stories of the *Jātakas* centre round the previous births of Gautama Buddha, who is believed to have passed, as Bodhisattva,[1] through innumerable existences as bird, beast and man, persistently qualifying himself for the attainment of Buddhahood by the greatest acquisition (*pāramitās*) of virtues like *dāna, śilā, kshānti, vīrya, jñāna, prajñā, bala,* etc. Unlike the reliefs at Bharhut, the representations of the *Jātakas* at Sanchi are comparatively rare, the emphasis here being on the incidents of the Master's life itself. Only five *Jātakas* have been identified on

[1]A being who is in the process of obtaining Buddhahood. Gautama was a Bodhisattva before he attained Englightenment.

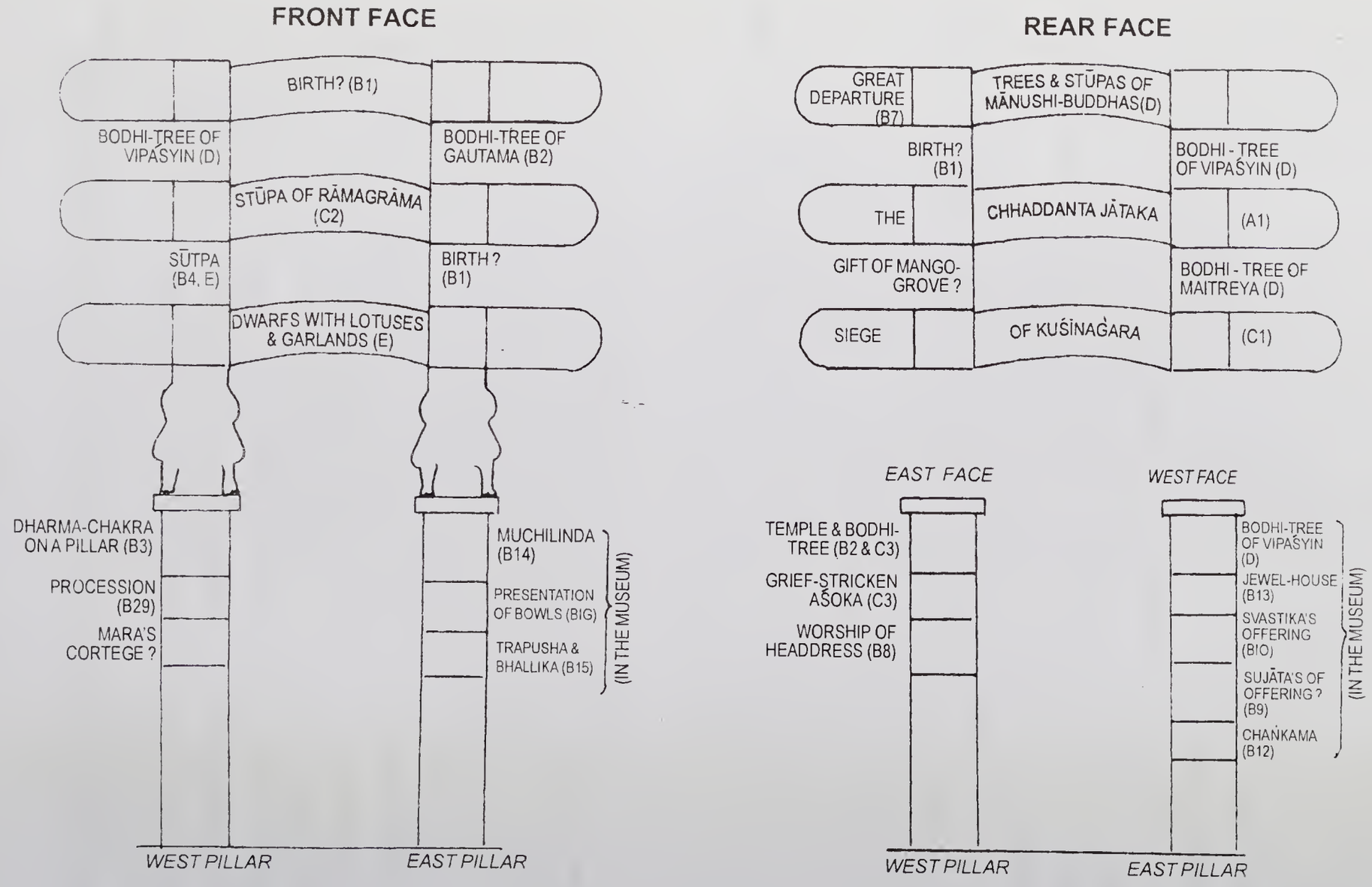


Fig. 3. *South Gateway : index of scenes*

the gateways, but they are treated in some detail and not summarily as in the Bharhut reliefs.

1. *The Chhaddanta Jātaka* (no. 514).—This *Jātaka* forms the subject-matter of three architraves: South Gateway, rear side, middle architrave; West Gateway, front side, bottom architrave; and North Gateway, rear side, top architrave. The story runs thus, Bodhisattva, born as a six-tusked elephant (Chhaddanta), lived in the Himālaya with his two wives—Mahāsubhaddā and Chullasubhaddā. The latter, imagining the former as her husband's greater favourite, prayed, out of jealous rage, to the Pratyeka-Buddhas to be born as a beautiful maiden and to be married to the king of Vārāṇasī, so that she might have the opportunity of taking vengeance on Chhaddanta, and pined herself to death. In her next birth, she became the queen of Vārāṇasī and, under the pretext of illness, persuaded the king to engage a hunter, Sonuttara by name, for bringing the tusks of Chhaddanta. Chhaddanta, though wounded by the shaft of the hunter, was all pity for him and helped him to saw off his own tusks. The queen, however, died out of remorse at the sight of the tusks. Of the three compositions, the one on the South Gateway is the most suggestive and explicit. The royal elephant is represented here four times; twice near the central banyan-tree, once in the extreme left as sporting amidst lotuses and last in the extreme right as standing alone as the target of the hunter's arrow.

2. *The Mahākapi Jātaka* (no. 407).—The top panel of the front side of the south pillar of West Gateway contains a representation of this *Jātaka* (pl. IV).

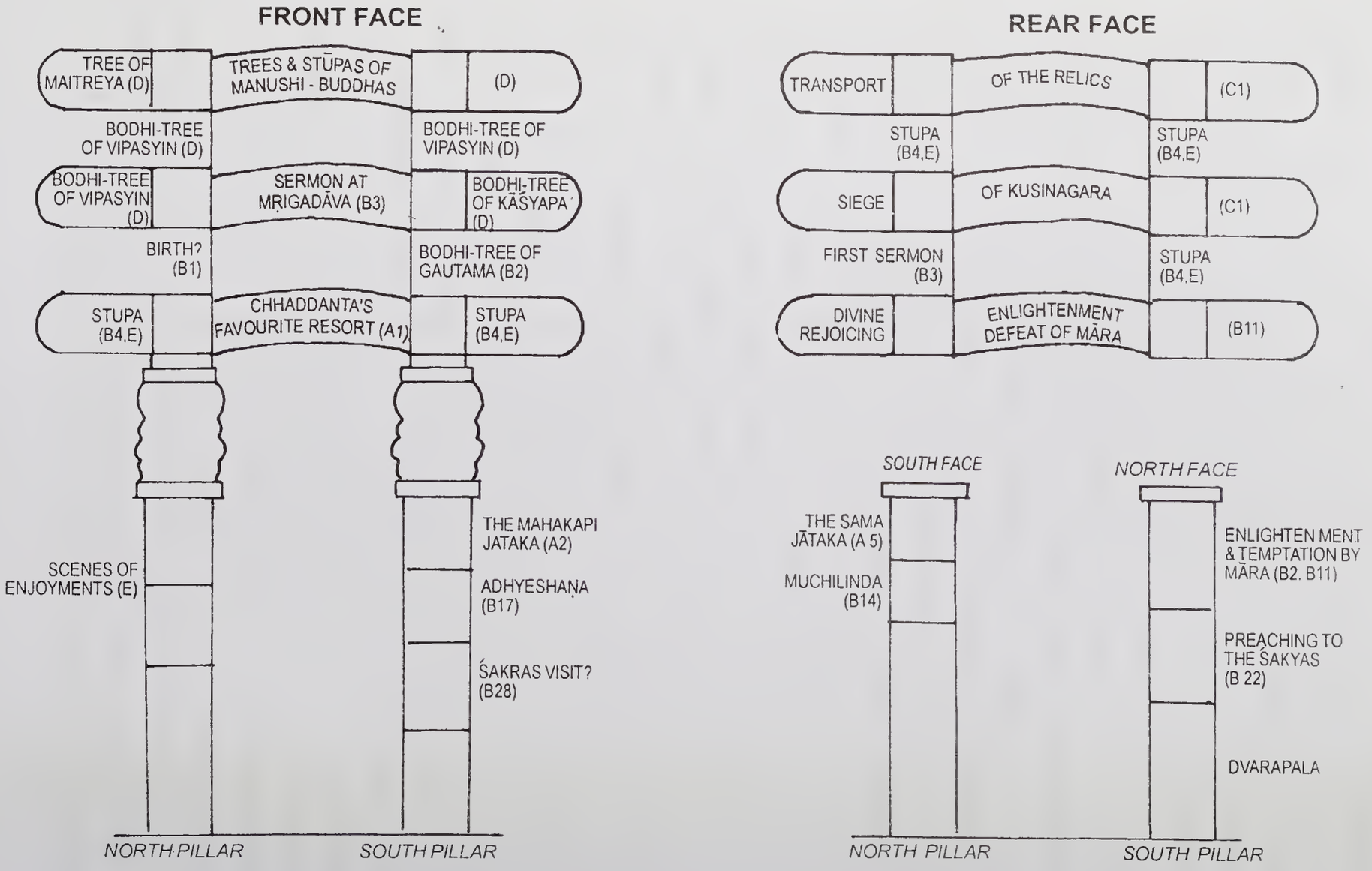


Fig. 4. *West Gateway : index of scenes*

Bodhisattva was once born as the chief of eighty thousand monkeys and lived with his retinue on the fruits of a mango-tree on the bank of the Gaṅgā in the Himālaya region. King Brahmadatta of Vāṛāṇasī, having come to know about the delicious fruits of the tree, surrounded it with his soldiers. Finding the monkeys in imminent danger of death at the hands of the king's retinue, Bodhisattva jumped to the other bank of the river and cut a bamboo-shoot, one end of which he fastened to a tree and the other to his own waist. As, however, the shoot was too short to cover the distance, he stretched himself to catch hold of the branch of the mango-tree and allowed the monkeys to escape by using his body as a bridge. His rival Devadatta, also born as a monkey, finding it a good opportunity to kill him, sprang at his body with a violent jump which broke his heart. Brahmadatta, moved at the sight of this self-sacrifice and compassion for fellow-creatures, gently brought him down. Before his death Bodhisattva gave an instructive discourse to the king, who afterwards honoured him with royal obsequies. At the top of the panel we find the monkeys escaping over the bridge, made by the body of Bodhisattva and the shoot tied to his leg, to the rocks on the other side. It does not depict the death of Bodhisattva, who is instead seen seated conversing with the king under the tree. In the foreground is the king on horseback with his retinue of soliders and musicians.

3. *The Vessantara Jātaka* (no. 547).—Bodhisattva, born as Prince Vessantara, was banished from the Sibi kingdom to Mount Vaṅka as a punishment for his having given away his elephant, endowed with the power

of bringing rain, to the Brāhmaṇas of the drought-striken kingdom of Kaliṅga. Vessantara left his city with his wife Maddī, son and daughter in a gorgeous chariot drawn by four horses. On the way he gave away first his horses and next his chariot to the begging Brāhmaṇas and arrived on foot at mount Vaṅka, where the family lived in a hermitage provided by the god Śakra. The prince next made a gift of his children to the Brāhmaṇa Jūjaka and even gave away his wife to Śakra disguised as a Brāhmaṇa. The latter gave her back, and through his grace Vessantara was re-united with his father, who freed the children by paying ransom to Jūjaka. This *Jātaka* is depicted with a great wealth of decorative and picturesque details on the front and rear sides of the bottom architrave of the North Gate-way. The story starts on the right end of the central section of the front side, which depicts the prince on elephant-back behind the battlemented rampart, his gift of the elephant, his leave-taking outside the city-gate after banishment, his departure with his family in a chariot and his gift of the chariot in the foreground and of the horse in the background. At the left projecting end is the prince, with his son and Maddī, the latter carrying the daughter on her hip, all plodding through the country. The story is then continued on the rear side, at the right end of which is depicted the arrival of the family in the forest. In the middle are shown the hermitage-life, Vessantara's gift of the children to Jūjaka in the absence of Maddī who was detained by a lion, his gift of Maddī to Śakra, the re-union of the family and the journey back to the capital.

4. *The Alambasā Jātaka* (no. 523).—A part of this *Jātaka* is depicted at the west end of the front side of the bottom architrave of the North Gateway. Here we find the hermitage of Kassapa, who was Bodhisattva himself. His son, the one-horned Isisiṅga, born of a doe, is shown twice with clasped hands, one in a lotus-pool and the second time in front of the hermit. The doe, mother of Isisiṅga, is seen lying at the feet of Bodhisattva.

5. *The Sāma Jātaka* (no. 540).—The top panel on the south face of the north pillar of the West Gateway commemorates the story of the filial love evinced by Bodhisattva, born as Sāma (Suvaṇṇasāma). His anchorite parents became blind through snake-bite, and Sāma dedicated his life to their service. One day, when he went down to the river to fill his pitcher, he was shot accidentally with a poisoned arrow by the king of Vārāṇasī, who had been out on hunting. Having come to know of the helpless condition of the blind parents, the king, full of remorse, offered his services to the hermit couple. The parents' sorrow, however, moved a goddess, through whose grace the boy miraculously recovered his life and the parents their sight. At the top right end of the panel can be seen the parents of Sāma seated in front of their respective huts. Sāma is shown below near the river with his pitcher. On the bottom left Sāma is shown again, this time wounded by the arrow of the king, clad as a hunter; a little to the right is the figure of the penitent king. At the top left corner is the happy re-united group with Śakra.

B. Scenes from the life of Gautama Buddha.—As already noted (p. 23), incidents of the life of Buddha find a prominent place in the reliefs on the gateways. In all these life-scenes Buddha is nowhere represented in his human form, his presence being indicated by means of symbols, such as a caparisoned horse without a rider but with an umbrella held above, throne, wheel (*dharma-chakra*), promenade, footprints and *tri-ratna*.

1. *Birth.*—Of the four great events of Buddha's life, viz. Birth (*jāti*), Enlightenment (*sambodhi*), First Sermon (*dharma-chakra-pravartana*) and Decease (*parinir-vāṇa*), there is no direct representation of the first, though some have found an allusion to it in the recurring lotus plant, the emblem of miraculous birth, either alone or with a female figure on lotus, recognised as Māyā, seated or standing, often being bathed by elephants (*abhisheka* of Lakshmī in Hindu mythology).

2. *Enlightenment.*—The *sambodhi* is represented by a throne (*vajrāsana*) beneath the *aśvattha-* or *pīpal*-tree (*Ficus religiosa*) at the foot of which Gautama obtained *Bodhi*. This theme occurs several times, sometimes in the group of the Mānushi-Buddhas. Anachronistically, some panels (North Gateway, rear side, middle architrave) show around the tree a hypaethral structure, supposed to have been built by the emperor Aśoka. In one example (East Gateway, south pillar, front side, second panel from top), the branches of the tree come out through the *chaitya*-windows of the structure. In the top panel of the east face of the west pillar of the South Gateway the throne with the marks of *tri-ratnas* is placed inside a barrel-vaulted pillared pavilion, above which

rise the branches of the *Bodhi*-tree. Perhaps this composition does not refer to Enlightenment, but depicts the first temple round the *Bodhi*-tree, built Aśoka, a presumption supported by the panel below where the grief-striken figure of Aśoka (p. 39) has been identified.

3. *First Sermon.*—First Sermon is represented by a wheel, which Buddha was believed to have figuratively set in motion (*dharma-chakra-pravartana*) at Mṛigadāva (Sarnath). It is placed either on a throne or on a pillar. In the latter case it is doubtful if it represents the Sermon or the pillar marking the spot of the First Sermon. The association of Mṛigadāva is sometimes indicated by the presence of deer. The absence of the first five disciples (*pañchavargīya-bhikshus*) in all cases among the devotees is to be noted, and it is likely that some of these may represent Buddha's sermons at Mṛigadāva without any reference to his maiden speech.

4. *Decease.*—The *parinirvāṇa,* which took place at Kuśinagara between two *śāla*-trees (*Shorea robusta,* Hindi *sāl*), is depicted by a *stūpa.* In the absence of these trees, it is likely that many of the *stūpas* only represent *stūpa*-worship without any association with Kuśīnagara.

Of the other events of Buddha's life, the following scenes can be readily identified.

5. *Māyā's dream and conception.*—East Gateway north pillar, south face, second panel. Being entreated by the gods of the Tushita heaven. Bodhisattva descended to the earth in the form of a white elephant, which Māyā, queen of Śuddhodana, the Śākya chief of Kapilavastu, saw in a dream as entering her body.

6. *Four Drives.*—North Gateway, west pillar, front sides, second panel. In the course of his drives through Kapilavastu, Gautama came across four ominous sights—an old man, a sick man, a corpse and an ascetic—which impressed on his mind the sufferings of mankind and the bliss of a hermit-life and led to his decision of renunciation. The theme is summarily treated here, for we only see a chariot, with an empty seat but an umbrella above, coming out of the city-gate. To the left is a riderless horse, which, coupled with the figure of Chhandaka, the groom, holding an ewer, suggests the Great Departure (*mahābhinishkramaṇa*). Thus two incidents are combined in this panel.

7. *Great Departure.*—South Gateway, rear side, top architrave, east end; East Gateway, front side, middle architrave. At dead of night Gautama left Kapilavastu on his horse Kaṇṭhaka, accompanied by Chhandaka, in quest of Perfect Enlightenment. After crossing the Anomā, he sent Chhandaka back along with the horse. The treatment of the event on the East Gateway is elaborate. In the four figures of the riderless horse can be seen the journey of Gautama. On the extreme right is shown the leave-taking of Chhandaka, who is doing obeisance to the footprints of Gautama, below which is his gloomy return with the horse. The *jambū*-tree within railing at the centre reminds us of Gautama's first meditation under a *jambū*-tree in his childhood during the ploughing festival.

8. *Worship of hair-lock.*—South Gateway, west pillar, east face, third panel. When Gautama cut off his hair along with the crest-jewel and threw it

heavenward, it was borne away by the gods to the Trayastriṁśa heaven, where it became an object of worship.

9. *Sujātā's offering.*—North Gateway, rear side, middle architrave. At the dawn of the day of Englightenment, Gautama partook of the *pāyasa* (milk-rice) offered by Sujātā, daughter of a chieftain at Uruvelā. In the extreme left can be made, out, near the *Bodhi*-tree, the figure of Sujātā holding a tray in her raised left hand and an ewer in her lowered right hand. A possible reference to this incident can also be seen in the fourth panel, west face, east pillar, South Gateway (in the Museum).

10. *Svastika's offering.*—South Gateway, east pillar, west face, third panel (loose fragment in the Museum). Before he took his seat under the *Bodhi*-tree, Gautama received bundles of grass from the grass-cutter Svastika and spread them on the seat.

11. *Temptation and assault by Māra.*—North Gateway, rear side, middle architrave; West Gateway, rear side, bottom architrave and south pillar, north face, top panel. When Gautama took his seat (*vajrāsana*) under the *Bodhi*-tree, determined not to rise until he had attained Enlightenment, Māra the Evil One, in order to thwart his purpose, took recourse to tempting and violently assulting Gautama, who, however, remained unmoved on his seat and called upon the Earth to bear witness to his right to remain on it. The Earth's answer silenced Māṛa, who fled away with his host. At the defeat of Māra celestial beings approached Gautama amidst great rejoicings. The same night Gautama attained Enlightenment. The treatment on the architrave

of the West Gateway is particularly telling. The *Bodhi*-tree stands at the centre of a hypaethral temple—an anachronism. To the right is the discomfited army of Māra, in headlong flight amidst panic-stricken confusion, drawn effectively, full of spirit. To the left is the solemn procession of the happy celestial beings, not given to emotions, the stately and formal group presenting a marked contrast to the host of Māra, full of vigour and action.

12. *Buddha's chankama.*—South Gateway, east pillar, west face, fifth panel (in the Museum); East Gateway, south pillar, front side, top panel. After Enlightenment Buddha passed four weeks near the *Bodhi*-tree, the third of which he spent in walking to and fro. The promenade is called *chaṅkama.*

13. *Jewel-house.*—South Gateway, east pillar, west face, second panel (in the Museum), Buddha passed the fourth week in thinking out the *abhidharma* in a jewel-house built by the gods near the *Bodhi*-tree.

14. *Nāga king Muchilinda.*—South Gateway, east pillar, front side, top panel (in the Museum); West Gateway, north pillar, south face, second panel. Buddha spent the fifth week after Enlightenment under a goatherd's *nyagodha*-tree. Next he went to Muchilindia, where he was protected from the rains by the *nāga* king Muchilinda. In both the panels Muchilinda, in the company of his family, is shown below with Buddha's seat under the tree above.

15. *Trapusha and Bhallika passing through Uruvelā.*—South Gateway, east pillar, front side, third panel (in the Museum). On the last day of his seven weeks'

fast, Buddha, while under the *rājāyatana*-tree, was offered food by two merchants, Trapusha and Bhallika, who happened to pass that way with their carts.

16. *Presentation of bowls.*—South Gateway, east pillar, front side, second panel (in the Museum). Buddha, having no bowl to take the food offered by Trapusha and Bhallika, was at once presented with four bowls by the four guardian-deities (*loka-pālas*). One of these *loka-pālas* is apparently Indra, as suggested by the presence of Pañchaśikha.

17. *Adhyeshaṇa.*—East Gateway, north pillar, south face, top panel; West Gateway, south pillar, front side, second panel (pl. IV). From the *rājāyatana*-tree, Buddha went back to the goatherd's banyan-tree with his mind still undecided if he would preach the Truth realized by him. Then the gods, led by Brahmā, exhorted him to preach it for the benefit of men. This incident is known as *adhyeshaṇa.* The panel on the north pillar of the East Gateway is immediately above the dream of Māyā (p. 31) and is reminiscent of the gods' earnest request to Bodhisattva for his birth in the mortal world for the salvation of mankind.

18. *Miracle of the serpent in the fire-temple at Uruvelā.*—East Gateway, south pillar, north face, second panel. In order to convert the three Kāśyapa brothers—hermits with matted hair (*jaṭila*)—who were living with a large number of disciples at Uruvelā, Buddha performed various miracles, one of which was his victory over a serpent. He took his residence in a fire-temple which none ventured to enter, as it was inhabited by a venomous serpent. He

overcame the creature, which then crawled into his begging bowl.

19. *Miracle of wood and fire at Uruvelā.*—East Gateway, south pillar, north face third panel. After Buddha's victory over the serpent, a sacrifice was arranged by the ascetics. But without Buddha's permission wood could not be split nor fire lit; oblation could not, therefore, be offered.

20. *Buddha walking on the river at Uruvelā.*—East Gateway, south pillar, front side, third panel. This is another miracle performed by Buddha when he walked over the Nairañjanā, then in flood.

21. *Visit to Kapilavastu.*—North Gateway, west pillar, east face, third panel; East Gateway, north pillar, south face, third panel. At the earnest request of his father Śuddhodana, Buddha, after seven years of his *mahābhinishkramaṇa*, paid a visit to Kapilavastu. The Śākyas, with Śuddhodana at their head, came in a procession to meet him and his disciples, who afterwards took their residence at the banyan-park presented by Śuddhodana. To impress the Śākyas and curb their pride, he performed a miracle by walking in the air, which made them, along with Śuddhodana, prostrate before him. The panel on the East Gateway is more suggestive than the other one. At the top is the royal procession coming to meet Buddha, below which are the aerial promenade and the astonished spectators. In the extreme bottom left is a banyan-tree symbolizing Buddha's residence at the Nyagrodhārāma.

2. *Buddha preaching to the Śākyas in the Nyagrodhārāma.*—North Gateway, west pillar, front side, third

panel; West Gateway, south pillar, north face, second panel.

23. *Buddha's residence at Jetavana.*—North Gateway, east pillar, front side, second panel. Anāthapiṇḍika, a wealthy merchant of Śrāvastī, became a convert to Buddhism. In order to present a delightful monastery to Buddha, he purchased the park of Prince Jeta by paying as many gold coins as would cover the ground a reference to which can be seen in the foreground covered with coins. The three favourite residences of Buddha—Gandha-kuṭī, Kosamba-kuṭī and Karori-kuṭī—are shown in the panel.

24. *Miracle of Śrāvastī.*—North Gateway, east pillar, front side, third panel. In order to confound the six heretical teachers Buddha performed a number of miraculous feats in the presence of King Prasenajit, the teachers and a huge crowd. One of them was his creation of a road in the air, which he ascended.

25. *Buddha preaching under the mango-tree at Śrāvastī.*—North Gateway, east pillar, front side, first panel. On the same occasion Buddha caused a mango-tree to grow. In the panel Buddha is seated under a mango-tree, delivering sermon to Prasenajit and the countries.

26. *Miracle of Sāṅkāśya* (pl. V). – North Gateway, west pillar, front side, top panel. Following the Miracle of Śrāvastī, Buddha vanished and went to the Trayastriṁśa heaven to expound the *abhidharma* to his mother. After staying there for three months, he descended by a staircase at Sāṅkāśya, accompanied by Brahmā and Śakra.

27. *Offering of honey by a monkey.*—North Gateway, west pillar, east face, second panel (pl. VI). The spontaneous offering of honey to Buddha by a monkey is regarded as one of the eight important events of Buddha's life. This incident is said to have taken place at Vaiśālī.

28. *Śakra's visit.*—North Gateway, east pillar, west face, top panel; probably West Gateway, south pillar, front side, third panel. Śakra, accompanied by his harpist Pañchaśikha, visited Buddha at the Indraśaila cave near Rājagṛiha.

29. *Royal processions.*—Several royal visits and processions are depicted on the gateways. At Bharhut the identity of the kings is known from inscribed lables, but in their absence at Sanchi the royal personages have been identified on the basis of the venue of the adjoining scenes. Thus, the procession on the fourth panel on the front side of the east pillar of the North Gateway, containing the episodes at Śrāvastī, is regarded as that of king Prasenajit of Śrāvastī coming out of the city to meet Buddha. Again, the panel on the west face of the same pillar of the North Gateway, immediately below Śakra's visit to Buddha at the Indraśaila cave, is taken to refer to the king of Rājagṛiha proceeding towards Veṇuvana, depicted below.

C. Events in the subsequent history of Buddhism.—The following events of this category can be identified.

1. *Siege of Kuśīnagara and transport of relics.*—South Gateway, rear side, bottom architrave; West Gateway,

rear side, top and middle architraves. Buddha attained his *parinirvāṇa* at Kuśīnagara, the capital of the Mallas, who took possession of the bone-relics left after cremation. Now, seven claimants, viz. Ajātaśatru of Rājagṛiha, the Śākyas of Kapilavastu, the Bulis of Allakappa, the Koḷiyas of Rāmagrāma, the Mallas of Pāvā, the Lichchhavis of Vaiśālī and a Brāhmana of Veṭhadvīpa, demanded portions of the relics. The Mallas, at first unwilling to share the relics, were brought to reason by the wise Droṇa, who divided them into eight portions and thus averted an imminent strife. The claimants returned to their respective places with their shares and erected *stūpas* over them. Thus came into existence eight relic-*stūpas*. Actual fight, which is not vouchsafed by the *Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta*, is show on the South Gateway.

2. *Stūpa of Rāmagrāma.*—South Gateway, front side, middle architrave. Of the eight original *stūpas*, Aśoka is said to have opened up seven with the intention of distributing the relics contained therein among innumerable *stūpas* erected by himself. He failed to secure the relics from the *stūpa* of Rāmagrāma, zealously guarded and worshipped by the *nāgas*. To the right of the *stūpa* is Aśoka with his retinue, and to the left are the *nāgas* with their families.

3. *Aśoka's visit to the Bodhi-tree.*—East Gateway, front side, bottom architrave. Aśoka's visit to Saṁbodhi is known from his own inscription. The *Divyāvadāna* refers to the withering of the *Bodhi*-tree through the machination of Tishyarakshitā, queen of Aśoka, jealous on account of her husband's inordinate attachment to

it. This nearly broke the heart of the emperor, who, however, succeeded in restoring the tree to its original splendour. Aśoka is credited with the construction of a temple over the *vajrāsana*. The top and the second panels of the east face of the west pillar of the South Gateway show respectively the branches of the *Bodhi*-tree rising above a barrel-vaulted temple enshrining *tri-ratnas*, and distressed Aśoka supported by two queens. The composition on the architrave of the East Gateway is sufficiently elaborate. A circular hypaethral pillared structure with open sides enclosing the *Bodhi*-tree with *vajrāsana* at its base is seen at the centre. Accompanied by his queen and the full complement of retinue, Aśoka is seen twice, once wearily descending from his elephant and the second time proceeding towards the structure with clasped hands.

D. Scenes relating to the Mānushi-Buddhas.— The symbolic representations of the six immediate predecessors (Mānushi-Buddhas) of Gautama Buddha along with the latter, mostly in a group but sometimes alone, were a very popular subject with the artists of Sanchi, as on each gateway they find a prominent place on the architrave, often covering its whole length. The representations take the form of either *stūpas* or *Bodhi*-trees. The latter, being different in each case, help in the identification of the individual Buddhas. Thus, Vipaśyin, Śikhin, Viśvabhū, Krakuchchhanda, Kanaka-muni and Kāśyapa are respectively indicated by the *pāṭali* (*Bignonia suaveolens*), *puṇḍarīka, śāla* (*Shorea robusta*), *śirīsha* (*Acacia sirissa*), *udumbara* (*Ficus glomerata*) and

nyagrodha (*Ficus indica*). The group is often depicted by alternating trees and *stūpas* placed side by side; but the portrayal by trees alone is also by no means rare, as we find them on the front side of the middle architrave of the North Gateway and the rear side of the top architrave of the East Gateway. On the front side of the top architrave (north end) of the West Gateway occurs, along with the group, the *Bodhi*-tree (*nāgapushpa*) of Maitreya, the Future Buddha.

E. Miscellaneous Scenes and decorations.— Besides the above, there are several reliefs which, though unattributable to any known incident in Buddha's life, are still of religious significance. Among them may be mentioned the worship of Buddha as symbolized by the empty throne or *stūpa* not only by human and celestial beings but also by the animal world, as seen on the East Gateway, rear side, middle architrave. In some panels of the north pillar of the East Gateway scholars have recognized the different heavens[1] : glimpses of heavenly life, which is assured to the performers of meritorious deeds, were intended to act as an incentive to pious work among the masses. Then come scenes, entirely of a mundane character, depicting men and women given to pleasures and sports. Animals, both real and fabulous, with or without riders, form the subject of a number of decorative panels. Finally come the rich and exquisite floral motifs, treated with great delicacy and ingenuity. Particularly noteworthy

[1]The central figure of three of the seven storeys holds, like Indra. a thunderbolt in its right hand, the left hand carrying a pot.

are the varieties of the 'creeper of life', which often effectively combines isolated beings like birds, beasts and men into one continuous stream of life. Frequently it appears in the role if a *kalpa-vallī* (wish-fulfilling creeper) producing jewelled ornaments and garlands. This motif, which, like many others, owes its origin to popular beliefs and religion, was sometimes appropriated by the Buddhists to edify their own faith, e.g. on the east face of the east pillar of the North Gateway, where the footprints of Buddha are carved at the bottom and the *tri-ratna* motif at the top of the *kalpa-vallī*.

(*ii*) *Stūpa* 3

Situated about 45 metres to the north-east of Stūpa 1, Stūpa 3 (pl. VII), though much smaller in dimensions (diameter 15 metres and height 8.23 metres excluding the crowning members), was modelled after the former. It has, however, only one gateway, and its dome, extensively rebuilt, is pronouncedly more hemispherical. Of its ground balustrade, four upright-bases alone are now standing; these uprights have a medallion at the centre and two half-medallions at ends with three facets in between

The *stūpa*, crowned by a single umbrella, was built along with its stairway, berm and *harmikā* balustrades in the second century B C, not long after the reconstruction of Stūpa 1, as one individual is known from inscriptions to have participated in the gift of the stairway balustrades of both. After a century or more,

the ground balustrade was added, and this was followed by the erection of the carved gateway, most probably in the early part of the first century A D , when the ground-level of the procession-path had risen by more than ·3 metre, hiding the lowest steps of the stairway. The gateway is slightly above 5 metres high; its decorations and constituents are similar in subject and style to those of the gateways of Stūpa 1, though the workmanship is definitely inferior. With the exception of the scene carved on the front side of the lowest architrave, which has been interpreted as the paradise of Indra (*Nandana-vana*), where he is seated at the centre on a throne under a pavilion surrounded by attendants, the reliefs have their analogues on the gateways of Stūpa 1.

The importance of this *stūpa* lies in the fact that the relics of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, the two foremost disciples of Buddha, were found by Cunningham enshrined at the centre of its dome on the level of the terrace. Inside the relic-chamber, which was covered by a large stone slab of over 1·5 metres, were two stone boxes with their lids respectively inscribed with the words *Sāriputasa* and *Mahā-Mogalānasa*. The lids are now in the Museum. Śāriputra's box contained a white steatite relic-casket, 0·152 metre broad and 0·076 metre high, covered by a thin earthen saucer of lustrous black ware, along with two pieces of sandalwood. Inside the casket were found a small fragment of bone and seven beads, variously of pearl, garnet, lapis lazuli, crystal and amethyst. On the inner surface of the lid was written in ink the letter *sā*, the initial of Śāriputra. In Maudgalyāyana's box was found another

casket, somewhat smaller, containing two small fragments of bone. The lid was initialled in ink with *ma*. The relics were taken away to London.[1]

(*iii*) *Other stūpas*

Besides these two conspicuous *stūpas*, there are the remains of a large number of other *stūpas* on the Main Terrace around the north-east, south-east and south-west quadrants of the Great Stūpa. They are either monolithic or structural. The former, often with the relief of a Buddhist divinity, are portable. None of the masonry *stūpas*, however, is intact, and most survive only up to their plinth. Immediately behind Stūpa 3 is Stūpa 4, referable to the second century B C, which exists only in a heap of loose stones without the trace of any ground balustrade. A coping stone (*Mus. Cat.*, no. A 69, Acc. no. 2712), relieved with an undulating stem containing within its foils lotuses, buds, leaves and birds, was found near the *stūpa*; it might have formed part of the balustrade around the *harmikā*.

Stūpa 5, to the south of Stūpa 3, is remarkable in its having an image of Buddha (in the Museum, Acc. no. 2771) in the *dhyāna-mudrā* on a moulded pedestal built

[1]The relics, along with the caskets, which are enshrined in the new *vihāra*, constructed in 1952, do not belong, as is coommnly thought, to Stūpa 3 of sanchi but pertain to Stūpa 2 of satdhara, 10 kilometres west of Sanchi, where Cunningham discovered two caskets of pale mottled steatite, each 0·076 metre in diameter and 0·051 metre in height, the inner surfaces of the lids of which were inscribed one with *Sāriputasa* and the other with *Maha-Magalānasa*. The dimensions and description of the re-enshrined caskets tally with those of the Satdhara ones.

against its southern side. The *stūpa* is built on a circular plinth with neat narrow courses of masonry and with footings and is ascribable to about the sixth century A D

Of the two small Stūpas, 28 and 29, to the east of Stūpa 5 and by the sides of the front projection of the platform of Temple 31, both having high square bases with cornices and footings characteristic of the early Gupta age, the latter presents interesting features not only in its having a core of large-sized bricks but also in its having contained, within a small relic-chamber, a bone-relic along with the fragment of a highly-polished vase of the Maurya or Śuṅga age, placed in a cup of coarse ware with a second cup serving as the lid. The size of the bricks and the presence of the early vase suggest that the relic was transferred here after the original *stūpa,* which might have been of the Maurya date, had fallen to decay.

The group constituted by Stūpas 12, 13, 14 and 16, about 61 metres south of Stūpa 5, is characterized by square plinths strengthened by footings, it belongs to the sixth-seventh century A D The *stūpas* are built of rubble and earth faced with well-dressed courses of stone. Some of them contain relic-chambers. In the fallen débris of Stūpa 12, the relic-chamber of which had been completely destroyed before its excavation, was found the foot and pedestal fragment of an inscribed image (*Mus. Cat.,* no. A 84) of Maitreya.Another image, that of Buddha in the *dhyāna-mudrā* (*Mus. Cat.,* no. A 19), made of the Mathura sandstone and belonging to the early Gupta period, was found set up against the western wall of the relic-chamber of Stūpa 14. The extent of its wear

and tear suggests that it was enshrined in some early Gupta temple before its installation in this *stūpa*.

Immediately to the south of this group is Stūpa 6. Its core is built of heavy blocks of stone interspersed with chippings as in Stūpas 3 and 4, with which it was contemporaneous. The existing facing of both the superstructure and the plinth, the latter square on plan and provided with footings characteristic of the early medieval *stūpas* of this site, dates from the seventh or eighth century A D.

Stūpa 7, about 30 metres to the south-west of the West Gate of Stūpa 1, has the same structural features as Stūpas 12, 13, 14 and 16. It stands to a height of 2·135 metres and is surrounded by the remains of a terrace, probably of a later date.

(*iv*) *Pillars*

PILLAR 10.—None of the free-standing pillars which can be seen on the Main Terrace is intact. The earliest of them is Pillar 10, erected by Aśoka, near the South Gateway of Stūpa 1, of which the lower part alone now stands *in situ* with fragments of the shaft placed inside a shed near by. Its capital is exhibited in the Museum (*Mus. Cat.*, no.A 1). This round and slightly tapering tall pillar, though not equalling its counterpart at Sarnath, must have been one of the finest columns by virtue of its magnificent capital contrasting effectively with its plain but elegant and proportionate shaft, the whole surface finished with a mirror-like polish. Both the

shaft and the capital are monolithic, made of the Chunar sandstone, and bear on them the imprint of the precision of Mauryan workmanship. The capital consists of a bell-shaped unfolded lotus surmounted by a cable-necking and a round abacus supporting the forefronts of four lions seated back-to-back. The abacus is relieved with four pairs of geese, each separated from the other by a honeysuckle. Although conventionalized, the lions are endowed with a spirited vitality and dignity. The damaged inscription on the stump records Aśoka's threat of excommunication from the Buddhist church of any monk or nun attempting to create schism in the *saṅgha*.

PILLARS 25.—It stands a little to the south of Stūpa 5. It was built during the Śuṅga period, as is suggested by its technique and design. It is 4·6 metres high. Its shaft is octagonal below and sixteen-sided above. The capital consists of a bell-shaped elongated lotus, surmounted by a deep square abacus carved with a balustrade in relief. The crowning member has disappeared. The fragmentary inscription, assignable to the fifth century A D was incised long after its erection.

PILLAR 26.—A poor imitation of the column of Aśoka, it stands a little to the north of Pillar 25; it is broken, its fragments lying near the platform. Dating from the fifth century A D , it consisted of two pieces—one comprising a square base and a circular shaft and the other a bell-shaped lotus, cable-necking, circular abacus relieved with unsymmetrical clumsily-executed birds

and lotuses, quadripartite lions and crowning *dharma-chakra* (in the Museum). The mutilated inscription on the portion of the shaft standing *in situ* records the gift of a 'Vajrapāṇi pillar', two pillars of a gateway, the *maṇḍapa* of a monastery and a gateway by one Rudra (siṁha ?).

Pillar 35.—The Vajrapāṇi pillar (i.e. a pillar surmounted by the figure of Vajrapāṇi) apparently refers to Pillar 35 near the North Gateway of Stūpa 1. Of this massive pillar, only the standing lower portion of the circular shaft, the capital consisting of a bell-shaped lotus, a cable-necking and a square abacus carved with a balustrade in relief lying on the ground and the crowning Vajrapāṇi (in the Museum, *Mus. Cat.,* no. A 99) have survived. Vajrapāṇi, clad in a short *dhotī* and adorned with a jewelled necklace, heavy ear-rings, bracelets and an elaborate head-dress of *kīrtimukha,* swags and jewels, is shown standing with his left hand holding the ends of his scarf. The right hand, which is broken, held a *vajra,* a part of which is still traceable on the right hip. An interesting feature of this image is its small halo, pierced with twelve pairs of holes evenly distributed around the edge and presumably intended for receiving the tenons of a metal halo.

(v) Temples

Temple 18.—Built on the foundations of an earlier apsidal hall of the Maurya or Śuṅga date, this seventh-century apsidal temple (pl. VIII), of which nine imposing pillars out of twelve and a pilaster with architraves over

them are still intact, stands on a raised platform immediately facing the South Gateway of Stūpa 1. The platform, presumably going back to the period of the original temple, is not spacious enough to include the antechamber, which, approached by a flight of steps with a moon-stone at the bottom, projects beyond the northern wall of the temple. Similar on plan to the rock-cut *chaitya-gṛihas* of western India, it consists of an apse, a central nave and side-aisles. It differs, however, from them in its having the apse encompassed by a solid masonry wall instead of by pillars. Of 5·18 metres in height, these tapering pillars are plain squares with octagonal necking framed on either side by petals and three-fourth medallions, this pattern having a wide currency in the caves of Maharashtra. Over these monoliths are brackets with rounded edges. Many terracotta leaf-shaped votive tablets, stamped with the figures of Buddha, *stūpas* and the Buddhist creed in characters of the seventh or eighth century A D , were found on the floor of the aisles on the eastern side of the apse.

The *chaitya-gṛiha* underwent additions in the tenth or eleventh century A D , when the floor-level of the apse was raised by means of stone-filling and also richly carved door-jambs were provided. The eastern jamb, decorated with the figure of Gaṅgā with her attendants and bands of floral motifs and human figures, is now in the Museum.

All vestiges of the *stūpa,* which once stood at the centre of the apse and from which Maisey unearthed a broken steatite vase containing small bits of bone, have now disappeared. A heap of ill-baked terracotta

roof-tiles, probably belonging to the original apsidal temple, was found, along with a standard bowl (*Mus. Cat.*, no. A 10) made of the polished Chunar sandstone of fine Maurya workmanship, at the foot of the west plinth of the temple.

Temple 17.—Situated near the north-east corner of Temple 18 and standing on a low moulded basement, this temple (pl. VIII), consisting of a flat-roofed square sanctum with a portico supported on four pillars in the front, is a remarkable piece of the Gupta architecture, noted for its structural propriety, symmetry, logical proportions and restraint in ornamentation. The portico-pillars and the two pilasters are each composed of a shaft passing from square to eight and sixteen sides, a bell-shaped lotus, a cable-filleted necking and a block abacus surmounted by a square lion-capital. The capital bears four lions, each with two bodies. Between the lions, which are at corners, is a tree. The door-jambs are decorated with vertical bands of foliate and rosette designs, and next to them are two pilasters with bell-shaped lotuses, their shafts similar to those of the pillars. Over the lotuses are block abaci supporting originally detached bracket-figures, perhaps of Gaṅgā and Yamunā. The temple is now without any image, though Maisey noticed in it the lower portion of an image of Buddha seated on a lotus-throne supported by two lions and inscribed with the Buddhist creed in medieval characters.

Temple 9.—The plinth of this temple comprising a shrine and a portico can be seen near the

north-west corner of Temple 18. The style and workmanship of the architectural members including pilasters, heaped on the plinth, indicate its origin in the early Gupta period.

TEMPLE 31.—Situated immediately to the east of Stūpa 5, Temple 31 is a flat-roofed pillared shrine, oblong on plan and standing on a high platform ascended by a flight of steps facing south. It contains an image of Buddha having an elaborately-carved round halo and seated on a double-petalled lotus. Originally built in the sixth or seventh century A D the temple was largely reconstructed in the tenth or eleventh century. To the early period belong the platform, the *pañcha-ratha* pedestal beneath the lotus-seat stretching across the entire width of the temple and probably the two pilasters carved with same pattern as on the pillars of Temple 18. The rest of the superstructure, except the two pillars standing in the middle of the shrine, belongs to the later period. The pillars in question, of the Gupta period, evidently found their way here from an older building. The image, though belonging to the period of the early temple, does not fit the original pedestal and was apparently removed from some other temple and enshrined in the period of the reconstruction of the temple.

The *nāgī*-figure, standing against the southern face of the platform to the west of the flight of steps, dates from about the fourth century A D. The tenon at its base proves that it had originally been erected elsewhere.

(vi) Retaining wall

The high retaining wall, running along the eastern side of the Main Terrace, was built not earlier than the tenth or eleventh century, when the accumulation of débris had led to the formation of an artificial terrace (called here the Eastern Area) to its east to a height of more than 4 metres. The major portions of Structures 19, 21 and 23 and Road 20 lie unexcavated under the terrace.

B. The Eastern Area

The stair against the retaining wall, opposite the East Gateway of Stūpa 1, leads to the raised terrace of the Eastern Area.

(i) Monasteries 46 and 47

The track from the stair goes straight to two courts, belonging to the same monastic, complex, which rose on the ruins of earlier monasteries, the lowest floor of these dating from the Gupta period. The complex is constituted by a group of the latest buildings on the site which are not earlier than the eleventh century A D The larger court, 47, has on its south a pillared verandah with a small cell and a long room behind it, on its west a covered colonnade and on its north a pillared verandah leading to an antechamber and a shrine on the western end and at the back to a corridor and five cells. Access to the smaller but higher court, 46, also surrounded by cells on there sides, is provided by a doorway at the eastern end of the northern verandah of 47.

General view of Stūpa 1. See page 15

PLATE I

PLATE II

Stūpa 1: North Gateway. *See page 19*

North Gateway : details of architraves. See page 21

PLATE III

PLATE IV

West Gateway, south pillar, front side: the Māhākapi Jātāka and adhyeshaṇa. See pages 25 and 35

PLATE V

North Gateway, west pillar, front side.
Miracle of Sāṅkāśya. See page 37

PLATE VI

North Gateway, west pillar, east face: offering of honey by a monkey to Buddha. *See page 38*

Stūpa 3. See page 42

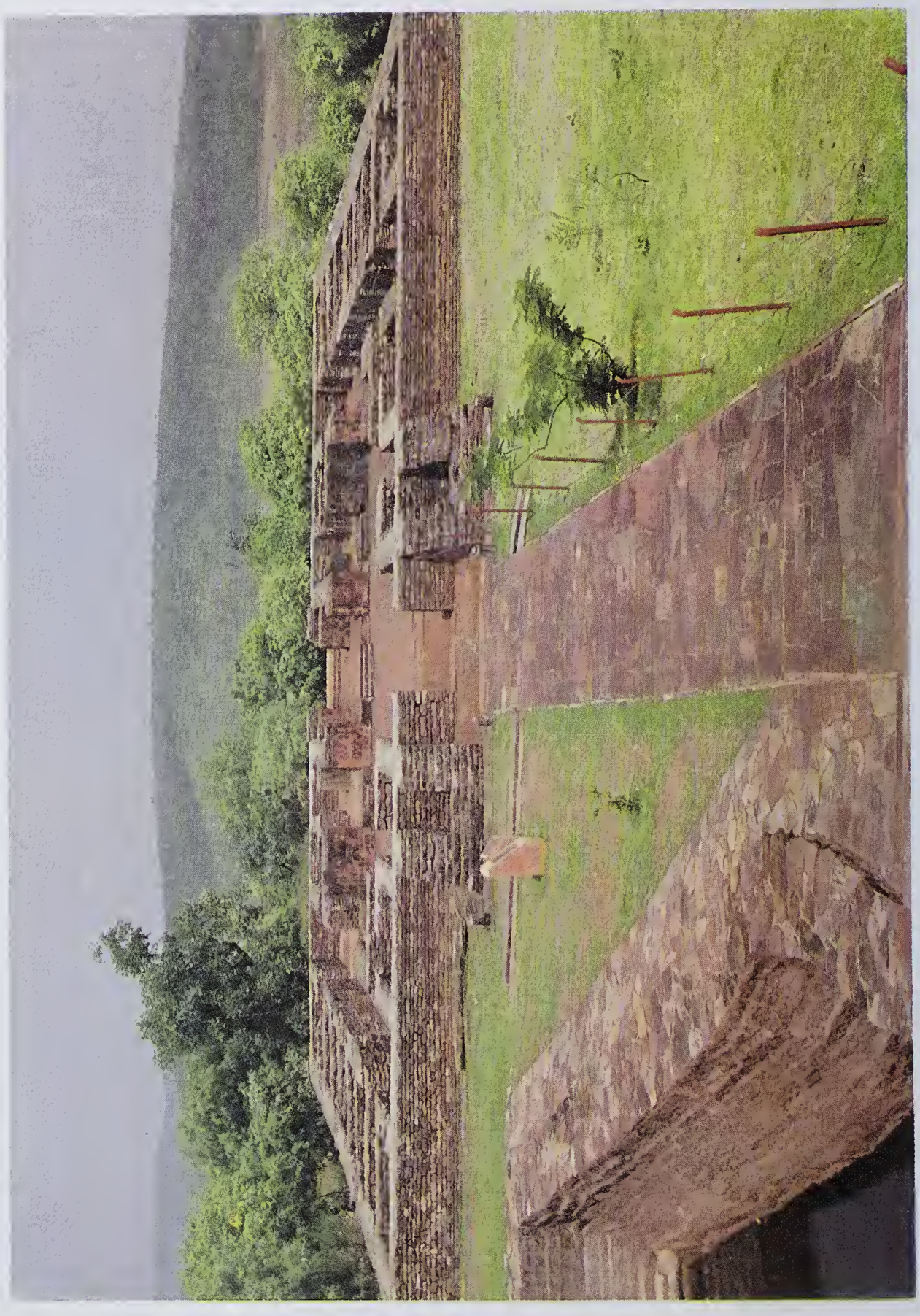
PLATE VII

Temples 17 and 18.See pages 48 and 50

PLATE IX

Temple 45. See page 53

PLATE X



Monastery 51. See page 60

Stūpa 2. See page 62

PLATE XI

PLATE XII

Stūpa 2, east entrance : medallion on the north pillar. *See page 64*

(ii) Buildings 49, 50 and 32

Immediately to the north of 47 is Building 49 now reduced to a mere plinth. Contemporaneous with Monastery 47 is Building 50, which, from the scanty available remains, seems to have been a monastery, dating from about the eleventh century A D. Within the precincts of this complex stands the flat-roofed Building 32, consisting of three small chambers fronted by a common antechamber and an underground cell below the central chamber. The side-chambers have no doors and can be entered only through the windows.

(iii) Building 43

Immediately to the south of Monastery 47 is a massive structure of uncertain affiliation built partly on the raised ground of the Eastern Area and partly on the lower ground to its south. One of the latest structures to be built at Sanchi, its plan, cruciform with round bastions at the four corners, radically differs from that of other structures. Excavation within the structure revealed the existence of an early medieval monastery, the floor-level of which was at a depth of 3·66 metres. The outer walls of the building stand to a height of 2·13 metres.

(iv) Temple and Monastery 45

Situated to the north-east of Building 43 are the ruins of this towering temple (pl. IX) and the attached monastery, which can be seen at the eastern

extremity of the Eastern Area and belong to two periods. Of the earlier complex, which dates from the seventh or eighth century A D , small sections of the platform, the cells on the north, south and west sides, the pavement of the courtyard, the plinth of three small stūpa, the kerb at the edge of the pillared verandah and a solitary pillar are visible; but the eastern cells and the remnant of the shrine are buried under the later superimposition. The verandah, somewhat higher than the courtyard, is edged by a stone kerb composed of alternating oblong and square blocks, the latter containing mortise-holes for pillars. Of the stūpa, two have perished down to their plinth, while the upper part of the third, cruciform on plan and with niches in four central projections, seem to have been deliberately stripped off at the time of the construction of the later pavement.

After the destruction of the temple in a conflagration which left behind charred remains, a new temple sprang up in the ninth or tenth century A D at its place The new builders laid a fresh pavement by raising the courtyard by 0·76 metre and re-used the original cells on three sides by heightening their walls and laying new floors at a higher level. A new pillared verandah was also constructed at a level nearly a metre higher than the courtyard.

The later temple consists of a roughly square sanctum (*garbha-griha*), *pañcha-ratha* externally, surmounted by a hollow spire *(śikhara* , and a narrow antechamber. It stands at the back of a raised platform which contains within it the earlier platform and is approached

by steps from the west. The platform probably supported a porch which is now entirely missing. A narrow circumambulatory passage is provided around the three sides of the sanctum and antechamber by a high wall pierced on the east by two decorated screens. Constructed of diminishing squares, the ornamented ceiling is carried on architraves supported by brackets set above the corner-pilasters as well as by independent brackets in the middle of the walls. The pilasters in the sanctum were presumably taken from some earlier structures. Except for the niches in the middle of the sides the exterior wall of the sanctum is plain. The surviving images of the *pārśva-devatās* in the east and south niches represent respectively Buddha in the *dhyāna-mudrā* and Mañjuśrī, seated on a lotus with his *vāhana*, a peacock, underneath, his right hand in the *varada-mudrā* and left holding the stalk of an *utpala*.

The spire (*śikhara*), to judge from the extent of detached carved fragments, was once lavishly decorated with *chaitya*-windows, *āmalaka*-motifs, etc. But neither its original outline nor any richness of carving can now be seen in the bare hollow chamber which lightens the load above the sanctum. The find of a huge but fragmentary *āmalaka* and a stūpa-like *kalaśa* vouchsafes that like other north Indian *rekha* temples of the period it was crowned with these members.

The door-jambs and the threshold of the antechamber are richly decorated with figures, animals and floral motifs. The figures of Gaṅgā and Yamunā at the base of the jambs are particularly significant in that they show the Buddhists adopting Brahmanical

motifs. At the two extremities of the door-sill is a figure of the god of wealth, holding a mongoose with his left hand. In the right hand of the right figure is a *padma,* while the object in the same hand of the left figure looks like a *śaṅkha.* In front of the threshold is a moon-stone decorated with a lotus and conch-shells. The moulded platform in front of the temple is relieved with salients and recesses and is decorated with niches containing figures, some amorous.

In the sanctum is enshrined an image of Buddha in the *bhūmisparśa-mudrā* on a double-petalled lotus, inscribed with the Buddhist creed in characters of about the tenth century A D , with a lion-throne below. The elongated-oval halo is richly decorated.

The temple is flanked on the north and south by a set of three cells with a verandah, its flat roof supported on pillars removed from earlier structures. The two cells close to the sanctum are provided with richly-carved door-jambs on which also figure the images of Gaṅgā and Yamunā; one of the door-jambs of the cell of the southern suite contains erotic figures, and near this door-frame but on the verandah rests a large image of Buddha in the *bhūmisparśa-mudrā.*

(v) Building 44

Immediately to the south of Temple 45 lie the remains of a contemporary structure. Reduced to a plinth, approach to which is provided by a stairway on the western side, it consisted of an antechamber and a rectangular hall. The cruciform pavement in the

middle of the hall, with all vestiges of its śuperstructure gone now, suggests the existence of a *stūpa*. On either side of the hall are foundations of tiny cells of uncertain purpose. In the hall are two figures of Buddha seated in the *vajra-paryaṅkāsana* and the lower part of a third image seated in the *pralamba-pāda* attitude.

C. The Southern Area

The track in front of Building 44 leads southwards to the Southern Area. The first structure on this track, beyond Building 43, is Temple 40.

(i) Temple 40

This interesting monuments contains the remains of three different periods, the earliest, going back to the Maurya age, being in all probability contemporaneous with the stūpa of Aśoka. Built on a high rectangular stone platform, 26·52 × 14 × 3·35 metres, and provided with two stepped approaches on its eastern and western sides, the original structure, probably of timber, was an apsidal hall, as the stone foundation of the hall, with indications of an apsidal circumambulatory passage, was noticed in the core of the platform. The hall was completely burnt down, perhaps deliberately, some time before the middle of the second century B C, leaving traces in the form of charred wood. The platform was utilized shortly afterwards for a pillared hall (*maṇḍapa*), of which fifty broken stumps in five rows of ten each still exist. For the erection of the *maṇḍapa* the platform was enlarged to the extent of 41·76 × 27·74

metres by building a retaining wall at a certain distance all round and filling the intervening space with heavy boulders and worked stones. As this resulted in the covering of the stairs, a pair of new stairways was made in the thickness of the northern retaining wall. Three sides of the enlarged plinth have projections of unequal size, the eastern side being still unexcavated. The floor, paved with large slabs, was raised by 0.4 metre.

The discovery of numerous pillar-fragments in the débris of the building suggests that besides the existing fifty pillars there were others in additional rows, and it is likely that they fell with the collapse of the enlarged portion of the platform. The pillars were large and octagonal, segments of which, containing donative inscriptions in characters of the second century B C , are lying on the site.

About the seventh or eighth century A D , a small shrine, having a portico with a stepped entrance facing west, was constructed on the eastern side of the hall. To this period also belonged the re-erection of the row of pillars, square below and octagonal above, in their present position; the pillars, though smaller and thiner than those of the hall, belong to the same age, as is evidenced by the votive inscriptions and might have originally formed part of the verandah or some ancillary structure of the pillared hall.

(ii) Monasteries 38, 37 and 36

These three small monasteries are ascribable to about the seventh century. Built on the usual monastic

plan of a square courtyard surrounded by an array of cells with a pillared verandah in front, the entrance, flanked by projecting pylons, was provided through the middle chamber of one of the sides. The existence of upper storeys is indicated by the remnants of steps in Monasteries 38 and 36.

MONASTERY 38.—Approachable from Temple 40 by the same track, it lies at the south-eastern corner of the circuit-wall, about 30 metres to the south-east of the eastern wall of Temple 40. Built on the remains of an earlier structure, it has a later accretion of a brick wall in the central room on the northern side.

MONASTERY 37.—It is situated about 27 metres to the west of Monastery 38. The latest in the group, its plan is more developed than that of the other two. Its outer walls are provided with footings, and on the floor of the front porch, between the pylons, lies a large square stone slab. Set in the corners of the central platform are four square blocks with mortise-holes meant for the pillars. The monastery has an individual feature of additional rooms on the southern and western sides.

MONASTERY 36.—Situated about 40 metres to the north of Monastery 37, it is the earliest of the three. Access to its corner-cells is provided by an open passage and not through the adjoining cells as in the preceding ones. An underground drain was found beneath the passage at the south-west corner. The square platform at the centre has a layer of brick-and-lime concrete.

(iii) Building 8

In this building, ascribed to the Śuṅga period, situated at the south-western corner of the circuit-wall, we find a solid square plinth, standing to a height of about 3·66 metres above the bed-rock to its north. It is approached from the east by a stairway, of which only a few steps at the base have survived. The purpose of the building and also the nature of its superstructure are uncertain. In medieval times the south side of the stairway and the adjoining east wall of the plinth were utilized in enclosing a rectangular space by building walls along the two other sides

D. The Western Slope

(i) Monastery 51

A modern flight of steps, built against the circuit-wall opposite the West Gateway of Stūpa 1, leads the visitor to an imposing monastery (pl. X) built on a ledge of the rock, about 7 metres lower than the Main Terrace.

This compact and well-preserved monastery measures 33·22 metres from north to south and 32·69 metres from east to west. Its outer walls have a thickness of 1·37 metres and the inner ones 0·91 metre, the masonry having a facing of hammer-dressed stones and a core of rubble and stone chips. An interesting feature is that the stone walls are extensively veneered with flat bricks.

The monastery is designed on the stereotyped plan usual for such buildings—an open courtyard at the centre with an enclosing verandah and a range of cells behind. The main entrance through the eastern wall is flanked on either side by a massive pylon. The brick-paved courtyard, approximately 16·46 metres square, is lower than the verandah, leading to which are four sets of steps, three on the western side and one on the eastern. The verandah, 2·13 metres wide, is separated from the courtyard not only by its height but by an intervening low kerb having regularly-spaced stone slabs with holes, intended to carry posts for holding the superstructure. At its four corners the verandah has angular walls with oblong chases for pilasters at either end. Water from the courtyard was carried off through a drain in the south-west corner.

Excluding the entrance-porches on the east and the opposite comparatively spacious chamber on the west, there are twenty-two cells in all, the four corner ones being isolated by the verandah-extension on either side. The central cell on the western side, larger than the rest, was evidently meant for some special purpose; it is fronted by an antechamber formed by breaking the verandah with partition-walls. The chamber was originally of much larger dimensions and projected, like the chapel of the similar monasteries of other sites, beyond the western outer wall of the monastery; subsequently, after the collapse of its western wall, the chamber was narrowed down by blocks of masonry, which is not bonded with the original wall, in the same alignment as the western outer wall of the

monastery, to provide passage in the direction of Stūpa 2.[1]

In the course of excavation a large amount of charred wood was encountered, suggesting that the verandah-pillars and the roofs of the cells and verandah had been of wood.

To the south-east of this monastery can be seen an old quarry turned into a tank. Outside the west gate is a giant bowl, formed by scooping out a large stone boulder.

A modern path leads from this spot to Stūpa 2.

(ii) Stūpa 2

Stūpa 2 (pl. XI) stands on an artificial terrace built against a ledge in the rock, about 320 metres down the slope of the hill. It resembles Stūpa 3 in respect of size and contour but differs from it in not having any gateway. Shorn of crowning members, berm and stairway balustrades, portions of which are now exhibited in the Museum, it has a bare appearance, compensated only to a certain extent by the well-preserved and decorated ground balustrade with four

[1]The excavator of the monastery supposed that the entrance was from the west. However, from the subsequent clearance of the deposit here, it became evident that the western entrance was a later improvisation. The excavator further identified the monastery with the one associated with the name of Devī, queen of Aśoka (p.4), one of the grounds for this early date being the size of the bricks used in the courtyard, walls of the cells and floor of the verandah. It may be stated, however, that the evolved plan of the monastery militates against an early dating, not to speak of the risk of relying on brick-measurements, particularly when the bricks in the monastery were manufactured for special purposes.

L-Shaped entrances. Its double stairway faces east.

The palaeography of the inscribed records on the balustrade and the style of the bas-reliefs suggest the period of its construction to be about the last quarter of the second century B C, though a few reliefs, the result of a more advanced technique, were added later.

The posts of the balustrade are ornamented each with one complete and two half medallions, except a few at the entrances which are carved from top to bottom. The theme of the reliefs consists mostly of decorative motifs, specifically Buddhist subjects being only a few. The former include floral and plant designs, animals—real, mythological and fanciful like stag with elephant's head or fish-tail, *makaras,* griffin, lion with human face, centaur with rider, woman with a horse-head (*yakshī aśvamukhī*)—birds, fish, *nāgas,* human figures and demi-gods like *yakshas, yakshīs, kinnaras,* etc. Among the floral motifs, the one most frequently occurring is the lotus, rendered in every conceivable manner, no two being alike. Of the animals, the elephant and lion are the most favourite. Some of the horsemen are shown as using stirrups, the earliest known representation of stirrups in India.

In contrast with the ornamental patterns, the stock-in-trade of the mundane art of the time, purely Buddhist themes play a subordinate part. Of the incidents of Buddha's life, the Departure, Enlightenment, First Sermon and Decease are represented symbolically by the riderless harnessed horse attended by a groom holding a parasol, the *Bodhi*-tree within a railing having

a throne in some cases, the Wheel of Law on a throne and the stūpa.[1]

The workmanship of the designs is primitive and sharply contrasts with the more developed art of the bas-reliefs on the gateways of Stūpa 1. The carvings are nevertheless interesting inasmuch as they illustrate folk-art in its true indigenous character unaffected by any sophistication. In spite of its archaism, it has the charm of simplicity, faithfulness and decorative beauty. In the treatment of floral patterns it is superb and can challenge any contemporary art, though in the handling of human figures it is singularly crude and archaic, suffering from the 'laws of frontality' and depending on 'memory-picture' without any regard for anatomical accuracy and consistency, depth and perspective. A few reliefs at the east entrance, however, show a more advanced technique and greater skill in modelling. Thus, in the central medallion (pl. XII) on the north pillar, the tall and slender female standing gracefully on a lotus presents a marked contrast to the clumsy and distorted figures elsewhere. This and similar reliefs were contemporaneous with those on the gateways of Stūpa 1.

The *stūpa* itself is no less important by its yield of the body-relics of a few Buddhist teachers. At a height of 2·13 metres above the terrace, Cunningham found within a relic-chamber (which was not at the centre but ·61 metre westward) a relic-box of sandstone, 0·28×0·24 ×0·24 metre including the lid, its eastern face inscribed

[1]Here, as in Stūpa 1 (p. 30), some scholars are inclined to regard the lotus and lady-on-lotus motifs as representing the Birth of Buddha.

with *savina vināyakāna araṁ Kāsapa-gotaṁ upādaya araṁ cha Vāchhi-Suvijayitaṁ vināyaka,* i.e. '(relics) of all teachers including *ara* (*arhat*) Kāsapa-gota (Kāśyapa-gotra) and *ara* Vāchhi (Vātsī)-Suvijayita, the teacher'. Inside the box were found four small relic-caskets of mottled steatite[1] inscribed with the names of ten saints whose burnt bones were enshrined within. The saints were Kāsapa-gota, the teacher of all the Hemavatas, Majhima, Hāritiputa, Vāchhiya-Suvijayata, pupil of Gota, Mahavanāya, Āpagira, Koḍiniputa, Kosikiputa, Gotiputa and Mogaliputa, Kāsapa-gota and Majhima, along with Dudubhisara, Sahadeva and Mūlakadeva, are said in the *Dīpavaṁsa* to have been commissioned by Moggaliputta Tissa, after the close of the Third Council during the reign of Aśoka, to preach the Law in the Himavat (Himalayan) region. It is interesting to note that other relics of most of these saints were also enshrined in the *stūpas* at Sonari and Andher near by. That all the teachers were not contemporary with one another is proved by the fact that Mogaliputa is mentioned in the Andher and Sonari relic-caskets as a pupil of Gotiputa, himself an heir of Dudubhisara, a colleague of Kāsapa-gota and Majhima in the mission. Thus, in Stūpa 2 were entombed the corporeal relics of at least three generations of teachers. Apparently, these had their separate resting places before portions thereof were deposited in the stūpa. The evidence of Sanchi, together with those of Andher, Satdhara and Sonari,

[1]The stone box and the relic-caskets are now in the British Museum, London.

shows that even by the second century B C the cult of relic-worship had extended from the remains of Buddha to those not only of his immediate disciples but also of the later dignitaries of the *saṅgha* and that the example set by Aśoka in the dissemination of Buddha's relics was followed in the case of others as well.

It is likely and appropriate that the builders of Stūpa 2 deliberately chose this lower spot for the enshrinement of the relics of these teachers, as they hesitated to enshrine them on the Main Terrace containing stūpa dedicated to the Master himself and his direct disciples.

A little to the north-west of Stūpa 2 and contemporaneous with it was a pillar with a bell-shaped lotus-capital and a crowning lion. A few fragments of the shaft are now lying on the ground, and the crowning lion is in the Museum (*Mus. Cat.*, no. A 81). Near the pillar are the remains of a ruined stūpa

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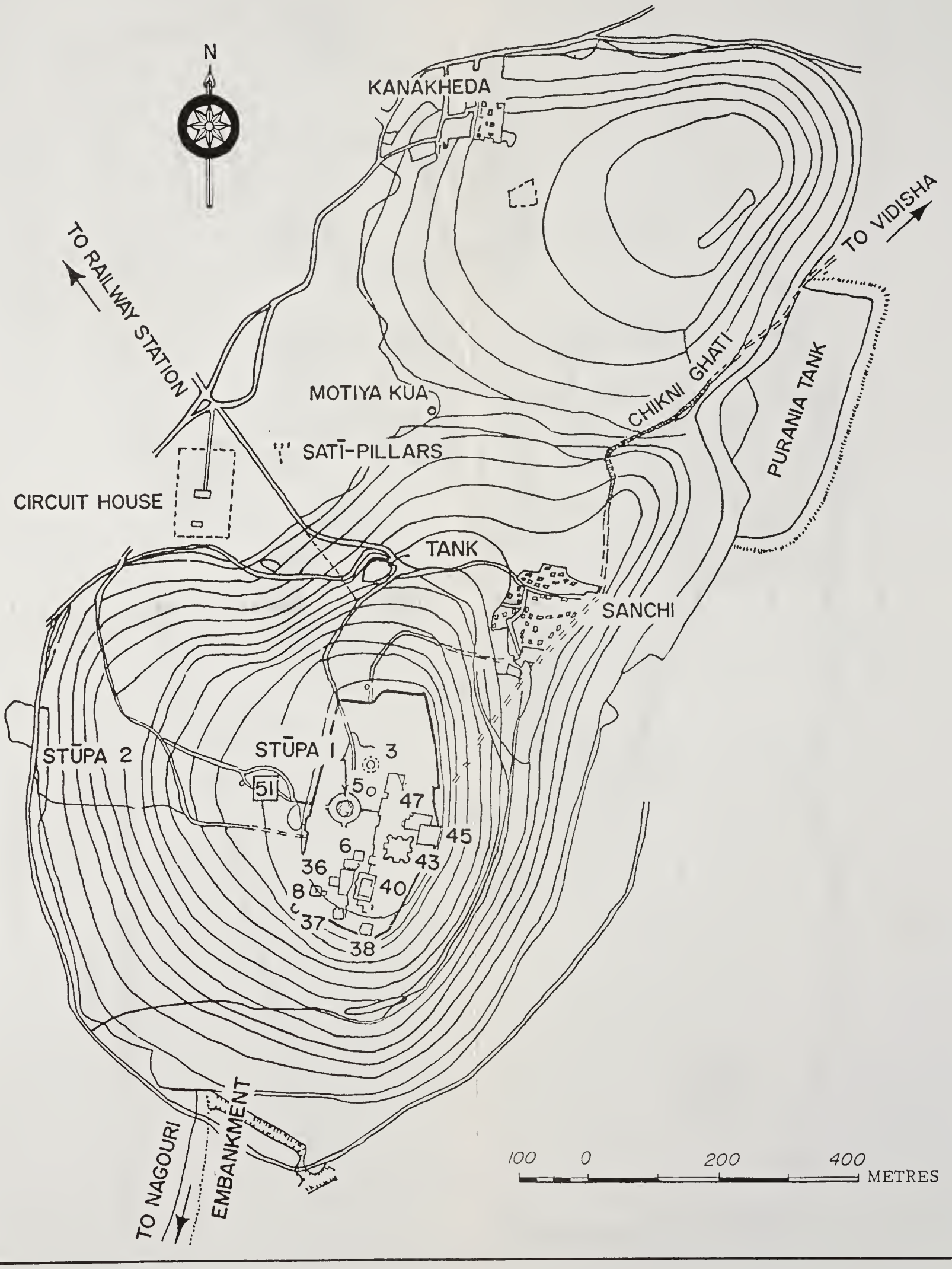
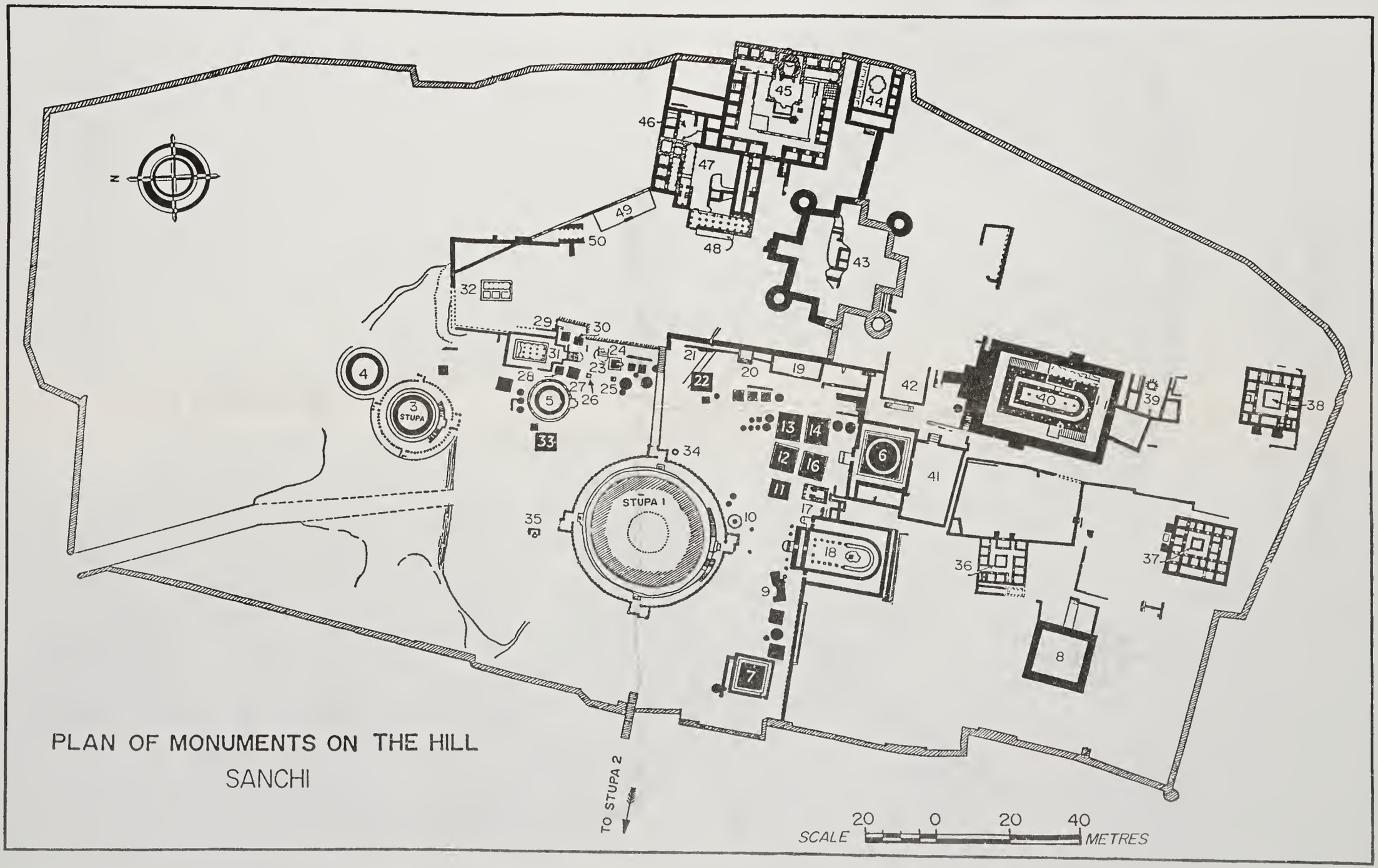
THE HILL OF SANCHI

CONTOUR INTERVALS 7·60 METRES





PLAN OF MONUMENTS ON THE HILL
SANCHI

R.K. Dalal